

288/28

POLITICAL PAPERS,

CHIEFLY RESPECTING THE

ATTEMPT OF THE COUNTY OF YORK,

AND OTHER

CONSIDERABLE DISTRICTS,

COMMENCED IN 1779, AND CONTINUED DURING SEVERAL
SUBSEQUENT YEARS, TO EFFECT A

REFORMATION

OF THE

PARLIAMENT OF GREAT-BRITAIN:

COLLECTED BY THE

Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,

CHAIRMAN OF THE LATE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION OF
THE COUNTY OF YORK.

VOLUME III.

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* This Paper is erroneously marked Paper 32 at page 157.

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* Obligingly communicated to the Editor by his worthy Friend Gamaliel Lloyd, Esq.

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NUMBER XVIII.

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*Letter from JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq; Chairman of
the Committee of Stirling to the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.*

REVEREND SIR,

THE Merchant Company here, having taken under consideration the intimation made by the King's Ministers of bringing into Parliament, a Bill for equalizing the Representation of the People, were unanimously of opinion that it would tend to the interest of the Burghs of Scotland, to have an alteration in the mode of Election of their Members of Parliament, and appointed a Committee to correspond with the other Burghs and Committees who may testify their approbation of the alteration, and particularly with the Yorkshire Committee, so as common measures may be followed, being sensible that unanimity will contribute greatly towards carrying the proposed plan into execution.

Vol. III.

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The Committee therefore beg leave to give the present trouble to know from you the plan proposed to be adopted by the County of York, and will esteem your answer a particular favour, in which it is hoped you will transmit every information you may think material for us to know.

I am, respectfully,

REVEREND SIR,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

JOHN CAMPBELL, Chairman.

STIRLING,
26th February, 1783. }

[4]

Paper II.

Letter from the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL to
JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq;

WANSFORD, April 5th, 1783.

SIR,

YOUR letter of the 26th of February, having been transmitted from Burton-Hall to Knightsbridge, and from thence back to Colsterworth, found me at that place in a situation of great distress and anxiety, from the severe indisposition of a very near relation. I trust therefore, that you, Sir, and the Merchant Company of the Town of Stirling, will have the goodness to excuse my not having returned an earlier answer; especially, as I am at present able to do little more than merely to acknowledge that I have received the honour of your letter; I am here at a distance from some material papers, which relate to the subject of your inquiry; but it shall be my first business when I have reached Knightsbridge, to communicate those papers, with every explanation in my power, which may be necessary to give complete, and

I hope, satisfactory information to the Gentlemen of Stirling.

In the mean time, I cannot forbear expressing the pleasure I take, in this commencement of a correspondence, on the subject of Parliamentary Reformation, between your respectable Committee, and that of the County of York. In England, many gross abuses in the state of Parliament have been produced by length of time; their pernicious effects have at last been generally felt; and have determined the Friends of the Constitution in Yorkshire and in many other English Counties, &c. to attempt the correction of those evils. They trust it is not too late for the Collective Body to interpose, and by a steady perseverance in a regular and peaceful mode of application, to carry some moderate but substantial Reform of their Representation in Parliament. They are aware also, that similar and perhaps equally gross abuses prevail in the state of the Representation of their Fellow Citizens in Scotland; and they are in general anxious for their removal, and ready to co-operate with zeal for that purpose; which they justly consider as being the common cause of every Friend of Liberty throughout the Kingdom.

I am Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Paper III.

*Letter from the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL to
JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq.*

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, April 24th, 1783.

SIR,

INCLOSED in this and another cover I have the honour to transmit to you the papers mentioned in my letter from Wansford; from which the Committee of Merchants of Stirling, will be able to collect the information they have desired, respecting the plan for the Reformation of Parliament which has been adopted by the County of York; and also, the reasons why that plan will not be brought forward in Parliament during the present Session.

At the first establishment of the English House of Commons, and for many ages after that period, the Counties, Cities, and Principal Towns, which form the main Body of the Nation, returned to Parliament a large majority of Members. Since the reign of Henry the 6th, the numbers in that House have received a gradual increase; till at last, by the addition of at least one hundred Parliamentary Boroughs, the balance of Legislative Power has been taken

from the Freeholders, Citizens, and Freemen of County Towns, &c. and placed in the hands of a few petty Burgesses who bear an inconsiderable proportion to the whole Mass of Electors. This is a fundamental defect in the present frame of English Representation ; for although mathematical equality is not to be expected in such matters, yet it never can be thought proper by any rational Friend to Liberty, that a thirtieth part of the Electors of England should appoint a majority of English Representatives. But this inequality is not a mere speculative impropriety ; it is a defect whose mischievous consequences have been severely felt, and threaten the utter ruin of the Nation. For hence an intercourse of corruption has been established between Electors, Members, and Ministers of State : Hence the Crown and a few great Aristocratical Families have obtained an unconstitutional influence in that Assembly, which ought to be the unbiaſſed Guardian of the Public Weal : And hence measures destructive to our best interests have been supported, and may still be carried on against the general sense of the community.

Such were the evils felt and apprehended from this great abuse, when the Counties and the Metropolis of England undertook the task of restoring the Constitution. Since that period, Official and Parliamentary regulations have been established, which tend in some degree to palliate the evil. But their beneficial effects can neither be great nor permanent.

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For although the influence of the Crown may have been diminished, that of the Aristocracy seems to have been augmented. The weight taken from the Crown, has not been transferred to the popular scale, it has been added to that of the Nobility; at least, that body has gained the preponderance, as recent events too plainly indicate. But to the Crown it may soon revert again; and after every possible vibration of power, there it must ultimately rest, unless the great weight be placed, where it ought to be, in the Body of the People. Whether they have most to fear from the undue influence of a single Person, or that of a few individuals, is a question which it is of little importance to determine.— For it is manifest, that till an effectual Barrier *against both* can be provided, the Liberty of the British Nation cannot be safe: and that Barrier can only be found in a House of Commons substantially reformed, and rendered a fair and free Representative of the People.

For that purpose, among other improvements, a melioration of Parliamentary Representation has been proposed by the County of York, and by many other considerable Districts. But it is not the intention of the Yorkshire Gentlemen, at least as far as I am able to form any judgment of their intention, to press for a perfect Equality of Representation. In the present circumstances of the Nation, they conceive, the plan of universal suffrage is unfit to be recommended; neither likely to be attained by any
A 4. regular

regular or legal efforts of the People; nor, if it were established, likely to be maintained and exercised in that purity and peace, which alone can render it a blessing to the Community.

Instead of attempting a Reformation therefore, which defensible as it may be in Theory seems at present not safely reducible to practice, they have been content to propose a more moderate change, of easier attainment, but effectual in their opinion to replace the Rights and Liberties of the Nation in a state of full and permanent security.

It would not be difficult to name fifty English Boroughs, in which a number of Voters less than a tenth part of the Freeholders of Yorkshire return one hundred Members to Parliament. By disfranchising those most obnoxious Boroughs, and adding an adequate number of Representatives to the Counties and principal Towns, the antient balance in the system of English Representation would be restored without increasing the number of English Representatives. This Reformation would be rendered still more effectual by a shorter duration of Parliament, by the abolition of nominal and fictitious Voters in Scotland, and the admission of Copyholders to the right of suffrage in England. And if this plan of Constitutional Improvements should be thought not sufficiently comprehensive, it seems by no means unreasonable to presume, that from a House of Commons thus constituted, the correction of every other abuse, the establishment of every other beneficial regulation

lation might be readily obtained, by which the mischiefs of *Despotic Power* on the one hand, and of a *factious and corrupt System of Government* on the other, might be for ever excluded.

Such were the general views of that very numerous and respectable Assembly of Gentlemen held at York on the 19th of December last.— And it is my firm belief that if it had been then known to the Yorkshire Gentlemen, that the Right of Election is monopolized by a few Members of a Council in almost every Borough in Scotland, their zeal for the liberty of their Fellow-Citizens would have prompted them as far as the offer of assistance might avail, to promote an application to Parliament from the unrepresented Burgesses of Scotland, for a proper extension of that right. If the Friends to a *General Reform* of Parliament would be consistent they must approve the redress of every *local abuse*, respecting Representation and the Right of Election : It must be their anxious wish that the Rights of the British Constitution may be distributed with an equal and impartial hand, in every part of the Kingdom. And it is hoped, the Advocates for *local Reformation* will be found equally disposed to support the *general plan*, whenever it may be brought forward.

The Petitions on this subject have hitherto conveyed to Parliament in general terms the complaint of Parliamentary grievances from the English Counties and Cities, &c. whose purpose is, to avoid the introduction of any plan of Reformation

tion into the House of Commons, till the fate of Mr. Pitt's intended motion on the 7th. of May shall be determined. If the efforts of that incomparable Senator shall be defeated on that day, by a combination of Men adverse to the just claims of the People, that event surely ought not to discourage the Committees, or lessen their zeal in a pursuit so just and necessary. On the contrary, it will afford an additional proof, how much it behoves the Nation to prosecute these claims with increasing ardour; to concert and adopt a Plan of Reformation at once moderate and efficacious, and to support it in the succeeding Session of Parliament by every means which can be devised, consistent with Law and the Constitution. On that occasion, perfect unanimity between the numerous Friends of Parliamentary Reformation in all parts of the kingdom cannot be expected. But if they can be generally induced, by the obvious necessity for union, to act in concert, and with a mutual confidence, the joint and regular efforts of their Committees to promote the COMMON CAUSE, can hardly fail to be crowned with final success.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL,

Paper IV.

Letter from JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq; to the Rev.
CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

SIR,

I Had the honour of your esteemed favours of the 24th ult. which I laid before our Committee, who perused it with that attention the importance of the subject required. Our grateful acknowledgements are due for your polite communications.

The great respect we entertain for the Gentlemen of the Yorkshire Committee, and the earnest desire of union in a matter that so nearly relates to the support of our Constitution, will actuate us to concur in such measures as may be considered the most proper for obtaining a Parliamentary Reformation on Constitutional Principles.

We have our petition ready to present, but have been advised to delay it till we know the fate of Mr. Pitt's motion, we are of opinion with you that no particular mode of Reformation

tion ought to be mentioned, only pointing out our complaints, leaving to the wisdom of Parliament to give redress in such way as shall appear most for the interest of the country. And we flatter ourselves the Committees appointed in the different Counties and Burghs will continue zealous in concerting and adopting measures moderate and efficacious.

Whatever may be the success of the intended application to Parliament, every well wisher of the country must feel how much the nation is indebted to your unwearied attention to this great work of Reformation, of which none can be more sensible than our Committee,—I have the honour to be, with due respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JOHN CAMPBELL.

STIRLING, 9th May, }
1783. }

Paper V.

Letter from JOHN CAMPBELL, Esq; to the Rev.
CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

REVEREND SIR,

I Have to acknowledge the favour of the Second Report of the York Committee and debates, &c. handed to me yesterday. The exertions of the Committee, of which you are Chairman, deserve the warmest acknowledgments of every British subject. Our endeavours to obtain a Reformation in our Parliamentary Representation, have not been altogether fruitless; many of our Counties have presented petitions to Parliament, and our Burghs are almost unanimous in applying for an alteration. But the importance of the business requires that it should not be introduced to Parliament, but with the utmost deliberation. Opportunity has been afforded of making our claims more generally known; and we have the happiness to find, that in proportion to their being known, they have been respected. From the Representatives of Scotland,

land, we have reason to hope for protection, because on them we have a particular claim ; but it is not on them only we are to place our dependence: English Members of Parliament have taught us to consider them as our steady friends, and to them we look up for powerful assistance. The grievances of which the Burgeses of Scotland complain, are those of a very respectable part of the British people to a British House of Commons, where distinctions, long since obsolete, are not known.

I have the honour to transmit copies of two pamphlets wrote on the subject, which contain a narrative of our grievances, and a proposal of a plan for remedying them, and should be extremely happy to have your opinion on the subject. A general Convention of Delegates, from all the Burghs of Scotland, is to be held the 25th of March, for the purpose of framing a Petition to Parliament ; and when it is supported by the suffrages of all the Burgeses, we look forward with pleasure to the success it must meet with.

I am, with due respect,

REV. SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN CAMPBELL.

STIRLING, 28th January, }
1784, }

Paper VI.

*Resolutions of the CITIZENS of Edinburgh,
agreed to at a General Meeting held in Mary's
Chapel, on the 21st of April, 1783*

RESOLVED, 1st.

THAT the present contracted mode of elect-
ing the Members of the Town-Councils
and Representatives in Parliament for the City
of Edinburgh, and the other Burghs of Scot-
land, is arbitrary and unconstitutional, whereby
the great body of the Burgeffes and Heritors
are excluded from the exercise of their natural
and inherent Rights, as free-born Subjects ;
and whereby an opportunity is afforded to
Juntos and despicable factions, (liable at all
times to be influenced by the Crown,) to keep
themselves continually in the offices of the Ma-
gistracy, to the exclusion of all other persons ;
so that to use an expression in the claim of
Rights, in consequence of which, their Ma-
jesties King William and Queen Mary obtained
the Crown of Scotland: "The Commissioners
to Parliament being chosen by the Magistrates
and Council, the King might as well nominate
that entire estate of Parliament."

2d. That, to remedy those evils, and to restore the Burgeſſes, &c. their natural and antient Rights and Privileges, it is the opinion of this Meeting, that an application from the Burgeſſes, &c. of Scotland be preſented to Parliament, praying for a Reform of the ſets of the Burghs, and extenſion of the right of ſuffrage at the Election of the Representatives in Parliament: And, it is reaſonable to expect, that an application, craving a Reform ſo obviouſly neceſſary for the welfare of the community and ſo conſonant to the principle and ſpirit of the Britiſh Conſtitution, will be productive of the ends deſired, and procure an act of the Legiſlature corrective of the abuſes complained of.

3d. That a Proper and General Plan, for the better management and regulation of theſe Elections ought previously to be drawn up, and ſubmitted to the conſideration of the Burgeſſes: And this Meeting do hereby empower their Committee to deviſe and prepare ſuch Plan, to be ſubmitted as ſaid is, and, when approved of, that the ſame be digeſted into the form of a Bill, or Bills, to be brought into Parliament.

4th, That, in order to bring about the Reform intended, this Meeting do hereby authorize their Committee to concur and co-operate with the Committees of all the other Societies and Corporations within this Burgh, that may be appointed. And further, this Meeting do hereby authoriſe their Committee to correſpond with

with the Burgesſes of all other Burghs of Scotland, and all other Societies and Perſons in Great Britain, on this ſubject of National concern, and to meet with any Delegates who may be appointed at, or ſent to Edinburgh by the ſaid Burghs of Scotland, in order to deliberate on, and concert ſaid Plan for General Reform.

5th, That this Meeting do publicly expreſs their approbation of the ſpirited and patriotic conduct of the Burgesſes of Scotland, who have already declared for Reformation; and do alſo publicly invite and ſolicit the Burgesſes and Heritors of thoſe Burghs who have not yet declared, to aſſemble together in a Peaceable, Legal, and Conſtitutional manner, and appoint Committees to correſpond and co-operate with the Committee of Edinburgh.

Laſtly, As the bringing about of the ſaid Reformation muſt unavoidably be attended with conſiderable expences, this Meeting do hereby enjoin their Committee to form a Subscription Paper, to be lodged in the hands of their Treafurer, Mr. William Hutchiſon, Apothecary, at the head of the Cowgate, Edinburgh, in order that all Perſons, wiſhing well to the cauſe, may have an opportunity of ſubſcribing for what ſums they may chuſe to contribute for the purpoſes above-mentioned.

Extracted from the Minutes.

(Signed)

THOMAS M'GRUGAR, Secretary.

Paper VII.

Letter from PATRICK BARRON, Esq; President
of the Committee of Aberdeen, to THOMAS
M'GRUGAR, Esq; Secretary of the Committee
of Edinburgh.

ABERDEEN, 22d November, 1783.

SIR,

WE have, on former occasions, expressed
an inclination, as we conceive to be
our duty, to address the Burgeſſes, our conſti-
tuents, frequently.

Since our laſt circular letter of the 30th May,
we have kept up a conſtant correſpondence with
the COMMITTEE of the CITIZENS of EDIN-
BURGH, as well as with other Societies and
Individuals, on the Subject of REFORM.

The exertions of the Edinburgh Committee,
in this important buſineſs, have been ſuch as
were truly becoming their ſituation. Their
correſpondence has, indeed, been very exten-
ſive; and, from the firſt characters in both
Houſes of Parliament, they have received letters,
approving

approving of the reasonable claims of the Burgesſes of Scotland, and promiſing countenance and ſupport to their patriotic endeavours. We ſuggeſted in a former letter, that as the buſineſs was of very great importance, it was not the intereſt of the Burgeſſes that it ſhould be introduced to Parliament but with the utmoſt deliberation. We are now fully convinced of the truth of that poſition. During the late reſeſs, an opportunity has been afforded of making our claims more generally known; and we have the happineſs to find, that, in proportion of their being known, they have been reſpected. From the Representatives of Scotland we have a title to hope for protection, becauſe on them we have a particular claim; but it is not on them only we are to place our dependence. Sympathiſing with us in the thralldom by which we are held, under the galling influence of arbitrary ſyſtems, Engliſh Members of Parliament have taught us to conſider them as our ſteady Friends, and to them we muſt look up for powerful aſſiſtance. The grievances of which the Burgeſſes of Scotland complain, are thoſe of a very reſpectable part of the **BRITISH PEOPLE** to a **BRITISH HOUSE of COMMONS**, where diſtinctions, long ſince obſolete, are unknown.

When the General Meeting, at Edinburgh, is fixed, it will probably, among other things, be determined, how, and in what manner, the Petitions to Parliament are to be delivered. In

the mean time WE convey to YOU an ADDRESS from the Edinburgh Committee to the BURGESSES and HERITORS of the ROYAL BURGHS of SCOTLAND, on the Subject of REFORM; and have only to request, that any thing which may occur to you, tending to promote the business in which we are all equally interested, by being communicated to our Secretary, will be thankfully received by us.

We are, with due respect,

SIR,

(In Committee) Your obedient humble servants,
PATRICK BARRON, President.
JOHN EWEN, Secretary.

Paper VIII.

Letter from THOMAS M'GRUGAR, Esq; to the
REV. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

EDINBURGH, 2d February, 1784.

SIR,

THE Committee of Citizens of Edinburgh,
appointed for the purpose of applying to
the Legislature for an Extention and Reformation

tion of our present Systems of Election, have directed me to transmit to you copies of our Printed Papers for the perusal of the Gentlemen of the Yorkshire Committee.

The decided and leading part which the York Association have taken in the business of Parliamentary Reform, has not only acquired to themselves distinguished honour, but called forth the exertions of the Friends of Constitutional Freedom in many other parts of the Kingdom. The Citizens of Edinburgh and the Burghesses of many of the other Burghs of Scotland perceiving with regret their inadequate Representation in the Legislature, and consequent political insignificance, and observing with indignant concern, men thrust into Parliament without abilities, without integrity, and possessing neither the esteem nor confidence of the People, have resolved by their united efforts to endeavour to obtain the restoration of their Elective Rights, and recover from the hands of despicable self-elected Juntoes, the exercise of the most valuable privilege of British Subjects.

You'll observe from the Printed Papers herewith sent, the particular nature of our present Systems, and the extent of the Reformation which we desire to bring about.—You'll also observe that it has been appointed, that a Convention of Delegates from the different Burghs, be held at Edinburgh the 25th of March next, for the purpose of deliberating on, and agreeing to some specific Plan for the better regulation

and management of the Elections.—The idea of a General Convention we adopted from a persuasion, that such a measure would not only give unanimity to our councils, and efficacy to our exertions, but convince the Legislature and the Public at large, that we are serious and determined.

Persuaded of the necessity of union among the Friends of Liberty, for mutual support and mutual council, we have presumed to open a correspondence with the Gentlemen of the York Committee, from which we promise ourselves much advantage, and which we flatter ourselves they will not decline. Without union the efforts for Reformation must be feeble, and will ever be disregarded by Parliament, whose interest it is that the present corrupt Systems should remain. If a general Association of the whole Counties, Boroughs, and Communities in the Kingdom which have declared or may afterwards declare for Reformation, would be brought about, the advantage which could thereby result to the Common Cause must be very considerable. By such a junction the Friends of Liberty would come to be united in sentiment as well as in exertion, and a vigour would be given to their measures, of which, in their present disunited State, they can have no conception. Such a scheme is by no means chimerical. The Association of the Burghs of Scotland and Convention of Delegates evidently shew its practicability. And might not an Association

ciation, on a more extended scale, be with equal facility, carried into effect; and an Assembly of Deputies, in the same manner, be formed, for the management of the general business? This idea we have held out for the consideration of the York Committee.

We have perused with peculiar satisfaction the account of the Proceedings of the two General Meetings of the County of York, on the 17th December and 1st January, and we intend to have inserted in one or two of the Edinburgh News-Papers, an abstract of those Proceedings for the information of our Friends in the different parts of the Country.

If we shall be honoured with the Correspondence of the York Committee, I shall communicate to you from time to time an account of our proceedings in the general business. In the mean-time

I have the honour to be,

with the greatest esteem and respect,

SIR,

your most humble servant,

By appointment of the Committee,

THOMAS M'GRUGAR, Secretary.

Paper IX.

*Letter from the EDINBURGH COMMITTEE to the
COMMITTEE of the other Burghs, transmitted
with the preceding Letter.*

EDINBURGH, 29th December, 1783.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU would observe from the newspapers, that a General Meeting of the Citizens of Edinburgh was held on the 24th current, and that Thursday the 25th day of March next is now fixed for the Convention of Delegates at Edinburgh. We do therefore entreat, that you will either send to, or appoint at Edinburgh, proper persons as Delegates to meet with our Delegates in the General Convention.

It is proposed, that Edinburgh shall be represented in this Convention by *four*, and each of the other Burghs by *two* Delegates.

If you intend to appoint Delegates *resident* in Edinburgh, we beg you will name such only in whom you have full confidence, and with whose principles, dispositions, and characters, you are well acquainted.—We have thought it prudent to annex hereto a Form of Delegation, which you may adopt or not, as you shall judge proper.

We

We also beg that you will cause insert in the Edinburgh newspapers, a short advertisement, expressive of your intention to meet us in the General Convention, and of your resolution to persevere in this business of Reformation, till the great objects at which we all aim are completely obtained.—Such advertisements we are confident will have a material effect on the Burghesses of the other Burghs that have not yet declared, and will also exhibit to the Public in general, that we are all seriously determined cordially to unite in our endeavours to effect a thorough Reformation of our absurd and tyrannical Systems.

We further entreat, that you will instruct your Delegates respecting the nature of the change which you are desirous should take place, and also respecting the nature of a General Plan, for the management and regulation of the Elections applicable to all the Burghs.—Such instructions will be of material service to the deliberations of the Convention, and will afford all necessary information on this very important business.

We have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient servants,

By appointment of the Committee,

WILL. CHA. LITTLE, Preses.

THO. M'GRUGAR, Secretary.

Copy

Copy of a Form of DELEGATION.

A^T the
day of

WHEREAS, it has been proposed and appointed, that a General Convention of Delegates from the Burgeses and Heritors of the different Burghs of Scotland, should be held at Edinburgh on the 25th day of March next, in order to concert measures for procuring redress of the grievances to which the Burgeses, &c. of Scotland are subjected, by the present arbitrary and unconstitutional modes of electing their Magistrates and Council, and Representatives in Parliament for the Burghs. THEREFORE, We the Committee, appointed by the Burgeses, &c. of

by virtue of powers received from our Constituents, do hereby nominate and authorize

and
or either of them, to
act as Delegates for the Burgeses, &c. of

in the said General Convention, with full power to consult, vote, and determine in all matters that shall be brought before the said Convention; and to concur and co-operate with the other Members of the same, in all legal and constitutional measures, that may be proposed and adopted for accomplishing the ends above-mentioned. Subscribed in presence, and by appointment of the Committee.

A. B. Preses.
C. D. Secretary.

Paper X,

Paper X.

**Memorial of the General Committee of Delegates
of Scotland.**

MEMORIAL *humbly addressed to the MEMBERS of
the House of Commons, by the COMMITTEE
appointed by the General Convention of De-
legates, for obtaining a Reform in the internal
Government of the Royal Boroughs of
Scotland.*

I**N** the discharge of our duty as a Committee,
appointed by the General Convention of
Delegates, for obtaining a Reform in the inter-
nal Government of the Royal Boroughs of
Scotland, we have the honour to address you:
Nor can we doubt that you will excuse this
freedom, when we inform you, that the subject
on which we write involves the interest and
earnest wishes of a great and respectable body of
the People of Scotland.

We know not whether the intentions of the
Burgesses of Scotland, though openly declared,
to

to obtain a correction of very gross abuses in the internal government of the Royal Boroughs, in that part of the Kingdom, have hitherto attracted your attention.

We therefore have the honour to inform you, by direction of our Constituents, that several Conventions of Delegates, from the Burgesses of a considerable majority of the Royal Boroughs, have been held at Edinburgh. These Meetings, the first of which was in March 1784, were both numerous and respectable. The abuses complained of were investigated, and brought clearly into view. The circumstances and situation of the different Boroughs were explained. A system of Reform of their internal Government, as contained in the heads of a Bill which accompanies this, has been prepared for the consideration of Parliament; and as the strongest testimony of its being both expedient and practicable, it has received the unanimous approbation of very respectable and intelligent Delegates, composed of Merchants, Manufacturers, and others, from the Burgesses of a considerable majority of the Royal Boroughs of Scotland.

Along with this Bill, we have the honour to transmit to you an illustration of the principles on which it is founded; for the object of the present application is, that you may be fully informed of the nature of the evils that exist in the internal Administration of the Scottish Boroughs, as well as of the System of redress,
which

which it is humbly proposed to submit to the wisdom of Parliament.

The present communication would have been unnecessary, if the Reform of the Scottish Boroughs depended entirely on any general idea of Legislation : But as the object of it is to obtain a correction of peculiar local abuses and institutions, so it is evident, that the subject could not easily be understood, especially by the Gentlemen of England, without a particular detail and explanation of the nature and history of these local usages and establishments.

The evils which exist in the internal administration of the Scottish Boroughs, as described in the illustration, will be substantiated from the very Sets, or Constitutions, by which they are governed; and Petitions from the Boroughs will be laid before the House of Commons, which will testify that the measure of Reform is supported by the general sense of the Burghesses.

It is, indeed, scarcely possible it should be otherwise. The Magistrates and Town-Councils in the Royal Boroughs of Scotland, are the Governors of the Police of the Towns, and the Administrators of the common property; yet these men are totally unconnected with the Burghesses, whose common affairs they administer. They are self-elected into office; derive no power from the Citizens; are not subject to their controul, in matters of Public Police; and are not in any respect accountable to them for the application of the Public money.

The

The annual Revenues of the whole Royal Boroughs of Scotland, though they are not ascertained with precision, may, according to our information, be moderately estimated at 100,000*l.* sterling. This large Revenue, belonging to the Communities of Boroughs, and which ought to be faithfully applied to the most useful Public purposes, is subject to the administration of men who are not bound to render any account whatever.

The Court of Session had, a considerable time ago *, in the case of the Burgeses of Kinghorn against Provost Hamilton and others, found that action did not lie in that Court, at the instance of private Burgeses, to compel the Magistrates of Boroughs to account. By a recent decision of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, it is found that this Court has no jurisdiction in that matter. The idea of a power, in the Convention of Royal Boroughs in Scotland, to bring Magistrates to an account for the management of the Revenue, has been reprobated by the late opinions of the Barons of Exchequer, as neither founded in Law, nor supported by any principle of expediency ; so that, as the Law of Scotland is now understood, there does not exist a power to controul the Administration of Boroughs, though it regulates the police of these communities, tramples on the Liberties of the Burgeses, whom it has reduced to the utmost insignificance, and manages a revenue of 100,000*l.* per annum.

* 1771.

In these circumstances, the condition of the Royal Boroughs of Scotland calls aloud for the interposition of the Legislature, and for the introduction of a liberal and salutary system of Borough-Government. That Reform for which the Burgeſſes of Scotland contend, is both in reſpect of its utility and propriety, ſupported by Precedents of great authority. In 1773, the freedom of the Town of Stirling, was forfeited by acts of bribery and corruption. In 1781 it was reſtored by the benignity of the Crown; and his Majeſty, after taking the advice of the Attorney General for England, the Lord Advocate for Scotland, with a Committee of the Privy Council, was pleaſed, for the better Order and good Government of the ſaid Borough, to alter the former Set or Conſtitution, by which the Common Council was ſelf-elected, and to veſt the Election in the Guildry, or Merchants at large, and Members of the Incorporated Trades, nearly in the very manner that is now propoſed by the preſent application for Reform. The wiſdom of this alteration is now conſpicuous in the appearance and Adminiſtration of the Town. Parliamentary ideas correſpond entirely to thoſe liberal ſentiments then diſcovered by the Officers of the Crown: For, in the late report of the Committee of the Houſe of Commons reſpecting the Fiſheries, it is propoſed, that the Magiſtrates of the projected Towns, ſhall be choſen by the Houſeholders; a more
extenſive

extensive communication of the Rights of Election, than is now claimed by the Burgesſes of Scotland.

It is proper to advert, that, as the Reform of the Scottish Boroughs now propoſed, leaves the Parliamentary Elections on their former footing, it is manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from the Reform that has been ſought and denied in England, which was objected to, becauſe it touched the Conſtitution of Parliament.

While the Burgeſſes rely on the warmeſt ſupport of the Members of Parliament for Scotland, who know their grievances, they reſoſe particular confidence in that liberality of ſentiment and love of Liberty, which have ever diſtinguiſhed the Engliſh nation. They cannot but think, that a ſyſtem of Liberty and good Government for the Boroughs of Scotland, will be cordially embraced by thoſe men, who, every day, experience, in their own country, the inſtimable bleſſings of a high condition of Freedom. The Spirit of Liberty has raiſed England above all the nations in Europe, in commerce, in arts, and in arms; and can we entertain a doubt, that the Gentlemen of that country will now be deſirous to extend the influence of the ſame ſalutary ſyſtem, to every part of the united kingdom?

To be allowed to participate in the extenſive commerce of England, was not the only bleſſing which the union had promiſed to Scotland. If not a more gainful, at leaſt a more engaging
and

and elevated prospect was opened, in the hopes that the Liberties of England, which had rendered that nation illustrious, happy, and powerful, might in time be communicated to Scotland. Until this event shall happen, it cannot with justice be said that the Scottish nation has experienced, in their full extent, those fortunate and brilliant consequences which were expected from the Union.

The abolition of the heritable jurisdictions, in 1748, was no doubt a step towards the establishment of the Liberties of Scotland. This measure, suggested perhaps by a violent cause, was adopted by the wisdom of a British Parliament. The present application for Reform, originates entirely with the people of England, and proceeds from a sense of Oppression and love of Freedom. It is indeed the first instance, in which the voice of Liberty, from Scotland, has been heard pleading her cause, in solemn form, before the tribunal of a British Parliament.

There is therefore every reason to expect that a measure, at once so moderate and so salutary in itself, so essentially necessary, indeed, to the prosperity of the Boroughs of Scotland, in one of which it has already taken place by Royal Authority, and so agreeable to the wishes of a great body of the people, will not be rejected, but will meet with that indulgence which a liberality of sentiment is apt to inspire, and that protection which the wisdom and justice of a

British Government will naturally extend to the Rights of every part of the British dominions.

R. GRAHAM, Prefes.

ARCH. FLETCHER, Secretary.

March 10, 1787.

In COMMITTEE.

Robert Graham of Gartmore, Esq;

Robert Cullen, Advocate.

Provost Kerr of Peebles.

Commissary Robertson of Peebles.

James Fergus, Merchant, in Kirkcaldy.

Dr. Gregory Grant, Physician, in Edinburgh.

John Dickson, Advocate.

James Summers, Writer in Edinburgh.

Thomas Wilson, Advocate.

William Macintosh of Aberarder, Advocate.

William Dunbar, Clerk to the Signet.

John Strachan of Woodside.

Robert Beaton of Kilrie.

Archibald Fletcher, Clerk to the Signet.

Mr. GRAHAM of GARTMORE, in the Chair.

The Committee unanimously resolve, That a Copy of the preceding Memorial, with the heads of the Bill and illustration, shall be sent to each Member of the House of Commons, and appoint the Memorial to be signed by the Prefes and Secretary, and transmitted to London by the Secretary, to be delivered to the Members by Mr. Wilson, Solicitor for the Reform at London.

R. GRAHAM, Prefes.

ARCH. FLETCHER, Secretary.

Paper XI.

Paper XI.

LONDON, April 7th, 1788.

RESOLUTIONS *at a numerous Meeting of the Committee, appointed to conduct an application to Parliament on the subject of Reform of the Internal Government of the Royal Burghs of Scotland.*

Sir THOMAS DUNDAS, Bart. M. P. in the Chair.

Resolved,

THAT the present System of internal Government of the Royal Burghs of Scotland, by which Magistrates and Counsellors are self-elected, is adverse to the Principles of the British Constitution.

Resolved, That it is an unexampled grievance, which requires immediate redress, that those Magistrates are not in any manner accountable, as the Law of Scotland is at present understood, for the expenditure of the Revenues of the said Royal Burghs, which are computed to amount to about one hundred thousand Pounds per annum.

Resolved, That the misapplication and profuse waste of the Public Property, and the enormous Debts contracted by the Magistrates, must tend to the utter ruin of the said Burghs, unless speedily relieved by the interposition of Parliament.

Resolved, That the Petitions to the honourable the House of Commons, from the Burgesſes of forty-fix out of the whole ſixty-fix of the ſaid Royal Burghs, and the very numerous and reſpectable Conventions of Delegates annually held at Edinburgh from all parts of Scotland, for ſeveral years paſt, on the buſineſs of the ſaid Reform, are highly expreſſive of the ſpirit and unanimity of the Burgeſſes in their preſent application to the Legiſlature.

Resolved, That this Committee, ſenſible of the importance of the truſt delegated to them, will continue to give every aſſiſtance in their power, towards obtaining for the Petitioners ſuch redreſs as their caſe ſo juſtly demands.

THOMAS DUNDAS, Preſident.

Paper XII.

EDINBURGH, 2d July, 1792.

At a Meeting of Delegates from the different Counties, for the purpoſe of taking into conſideration the preſent State of the Laws which concern the Election of Commiſſioners to ſerve in Parliament for the Counties and Stewartries in Scotland.

P R E S E N T,

Right Honourable Lord Dac.

Honourable Henry Erſkine, Dean of Faculty.

Lord Chief Baron of Exchequer.

The

The Lord Advocate of Scotland, M. P.
 The Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, Bart.
 Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, Bart.
 Sir William Maxwell of Monrieth, Bart.
 Sir William Maxwell of Springkell, Bart.
 Sir John Inglis of Crammond, Bart.
 Sir Peter Warrender of Lochend, Bart.
 Sir Thomas Dundas of Kerse, Bart. M. P.
 Sir Alex. Livingston of Bedlormie and Westquarter, Bart.
 Sir Philip Ainslie of Comelybank.
 George Leith of Overhall, Esq.
 Francis Farquharson of Haughton, Esq.
 Charles Hay of Faichfield, Esq; Advocate.
 Ja. Gordon, younger, of Craig, Esq; Advocate.
 George Robinson of Gask, Esq.
 William M'Leod Bannatyne of Kaims, Esq; Advocate.
 Patrick M'Dougall, younger, of M'Dougall, Esq;
 William Fullarton of Fullarton, Esq.
 Andrew Dunlop of Dunlop, Esq.
 Alexander Bruce of Kennet, Esq.
 John Francis Erskine of Marr, Esq.
 Col. James Francis Erskine of Ferrest.
 Robert Dalziel of Glenae, Esq; Advocate.
 Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, Esq.
 Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch, Esq; Advocate.
 Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, Esq.
 Robert Graham of Gartmore, Esq.
 Arch. Campbell, younger, of Claitrick, Esq; Advocate.
 John Buchanan of Ardoch, Esq.
 James Calderwood Durham of Polton, Esq.
 George Cummin of Relugas, Esq.
 Colonel Weyms of Weyms, M. P.
 James Oswald of Dunnikier, Esq.
 John Anstruther of Ardit, Esq; Advocate.
 Neil Fergusson of Pisenlo, Esq; Advocate.
 Charles Brown of Coalston, Esq; Advocate.
 George Buchan Hepburn of Smeaton, Esq; Advocate.
 Norman-M'Leod of M'Leod, Esq; M. P.
 James Grant, younger, of Corrymonie, Esq; Advocate.
 Alexander Fraser Tyler of Balnain, Esq; Advocate.
 James Fraser of Gortuleg, Esq.
 Dr. Coventry of Shanwell.
 George Grahame of Kinross, Esq; M. P.
 George Robertson Scott of Benholm, Esq; Advocate.

William

William Fullarton of Carsteirs, Esq.
 Colonel Dalrymple of Fordel.
 John Dickson of Coulter, Esq; Advocate.
 William Baillie of Polkemmet, Esq; Advocate.
 William Maxwell of Carridden, Esq.
 James Wolfe Murray of Cringaltee, Esq; Advocate.
 George Paterfon of Castlehuntley, Esq.
 Alexander Muir M'Kenzie of Delvin, Esq.
 William M'Donald of St. Martin's, Esq.
 David Smyth of Methvin, Esq; Advocate.
 Andrew Houston of Jordanhill, Esq;
 William Morehead of Herbertshire, Esq/
 Peter Spiers of Culcrench, Esq.
 John M'Farlane of Kirkton, Esq.
 Andrew M'Dowall of Logan, Esq; M. P.
 Robert Hawthorn Stewart of Physgill, Esq.
 Alexander Gordon of Culvennan, Esq.
 Thomas Adair of Genoch, Esq.

Sir Thomas Dundas proposed, that the Lord Chief Baron should be called to the Chair, which was done by the unanimous voice of the Meeting, and his Lordship having taken the Chair, the following Resolutions were moved by Sir Thomas Dundas :—

Resolved, That it appears to this Meeting, that the attention of the Legislature, both before and since the treaty of Union, has been frequently called to regulate the nature of those freehold qualifications which intitle Landholders to vote in the Election of Commissioners for the counties of Scotland, with which view many statutes have been passed, particularly from the year 1681, to the present time, for remedying the abuses which have been felt, notwithstanding whereof, many defects and inconveniences still exist in this part of our Law, which

which have been long complained of by the Landholders of Scotland.

Resolved, That it appears to this Meeting, that under the appointment of the several Counties who have named Delegates, in consequence of a letter from Sir Alexander Ramsay, as presiding at a Meeting of Landed Gentlemen on the 25th February, 1792, laid before the Commissioners of Supply (land tax) for these Counties at their General Meeting on the 30th April last, the object of the present Meeting appears to be to prepare the draught of a Bill for altering and amending the present Laws, with a view to remedy these abuses and defects. Therefore,

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to consider the present State of the Laws, regarding the qualification of Electors of Representatives of the Counties of Scotland, and of the best method of remedying the present existing defects in the general system of County Elections, on principles suited to that attachment which this Meeting feel and know their Constituents to entertain, to the present happy Constitution of this country; and to report their opinion to a General Meeting, to be held at Edinburgh on Monday the 10th of December next, of the present Delegates, or of such as shall be sent from any of the County Meetings, which shall be held for that purpose betwixt and that time.

And these Resolutions being seconded by the Lord Advocate, were carried unanimously.—
After that,

On the motion of Sir Thomas Dundas, the Meeting unanimously Resolved, that the Committee should consist of the following Gentlemen :

The Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer	Mr. Charles Hay
The Hon. Henry Erskine	Mr. M'Leod Bannatyne
The Lord Advocate	Mr. Houston of Jordanhill
Mr. Erskine of Marr	Mr. Grant of Corrymonie
Sir W. Maxwell of Monreith	Mr. Fergusson, Craigdarroch
Sir Thomas Dundas	Mr. Thomas Adair
Mr. Campbell of Claitick	Mr. George Robertson Scott
Colonel M'Leod	AND
	Mr. Smith of Methven.

And five to be a quorum. That the Lord Chief Baron be the Convener of the Committee, and Thomas Adair, Clerk to the Signet, Secretary to the General Meeting and Committee.

Resolved unanimously, That a list of the Delegates who attended this Meeting, and their proceedings, be published in the Edinburgh and London newspapers; and that copies thereof be printed, and transmitted by the Secretary to the Conveners of the respective Counties and Stewartries in Scotland.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Lord Chief Baron, for the attention and propriety with which he has conducted the proceedings. And, lastly,

Resolved, That this Meeting be adjourned to Monday the 10th of December next.

(Signed) JA. MONTGOMERY, Preses.
THO. ADAIR, Secretary.

Paper XIII.

GLASGOW, 23d July, 1792.

RESOLUTIONS, at a Meeting of a SOCIETY formed in Glasgow for the purpose of effecting Constitutional and Parliamentary Reform; held at the Prince of Wales's Tavern.

The LORD PROVOST, in the Chair.

It was unanimously Resolved,

1st. **T**HAT this Society venerate the principles of the British Constitution, as designed for the happiness of the people, in the security of their valuable Rights and Privileges, but they are convinced, that there is just cause to complain of the numberless corruptions and abuses which deform it, and render it in practice a complete contradiction of the theory.

2d. That these abuses are solely to be attributed to the present inadequate state of the Representation of the People, both with regard to the duration of Parliaments, and to the mode in which persons are chosen to serve therein.

3d. That

3d. That it is essential to the purity of the Constitution, that the Rights of the People should be preserved inviolate. Hence that Right, to which every British Commoner is entitled, of exercising an actual share in the legislation, or of electing one of those who are to frame the laws, ought to be established, on a firm and solid foundation, in order that the Commons' House of Parliament may become, in reality, the Representative Body of the Commoners of Great Britain, nominated by the actual and free suffrages of the people at large.

4th. That the present unconstitutional duration of Parliaments ought to be contracted, so as that the Right of Election may be frequently exercised by the people, as the best means of securing the integrity of their Representatives, who, if they were to depend entirely on the approbation of their Constituents, for the renewal of their trust, would be anxiously attentive to the faithful discharge of their duty.

5th. That the privileges of equal representation, frequent elections, and the universal right of suffrage, "are of so transcendant a nature, that in opposition to the claim of the people to their enjoyment, the longest period of prescription is pleaded in vain. They form the grand palladium of the nation, they are the birth-right of Britons; their best inheritance, which without the complicated crimes of Treason to their country, and injustice to their posterity, they cannot alienate or resign; they form

form that triple cord of strength, which alone can be relied on, to hold, in times of tempest, the vessel of the State." *

6th. That this society will, therefore, zealously pursue every constitutional and temperate measure, for effecting a Reform in the Parliamentary Representation of the Commons of Great-Britain, which is the general purpose and leading principle of their Association. At the same time they, in the most serious manner, disclaim the smallest intention or idea of exciting Sedition, or of attempting to overthrow the British Constitution. They are only anxious, by a timely and peaceable reform of abuses, to destroy or to remedy evils, which have been sensibly felt, and long complained of; and they are humbly confident that, by professing and adhering to such principles, they exhibit undeniable proofs of their respect for the Constitution, and of concern for the peace and welfare of the Community of which they are Members.

7th. That this Society observe, with pain and regret, the unjust refusal experienced by the Burgeses of Scotland, in the last Parliament, to their application for a Reform in the internal Government of the Royal Burghs, which is one among many instances, of the corruption and abuses introduced by unequal Representation; and proves that "every application for the re-

* Vide the plan of Parliamentary Reform, adopted by the Westminster Association (of which Mr. Pitt was a Member) and introduced into Parliament by the Duke of Richmond, in 1780.

dress of grievances, made to a Body of Men, no longer under the influence of their Constituents, but uniformly acting in subserviency to the views and interests of the Crown, must be unsuccessful;”* for although it was universally admitted, that the Burgesses possessed an inherent and undoubted right to the Reform which they demanded, yet, (in compliance with that steadfast purpose, which the Commons seem to have laid down, of opposing every measure of redress) it was almost as universally agreed, to refuse their request.

8th. That this Society also embrace the objects of establishing in this kingdom, the trial BY JURY IN CIVIL CASES, and of confirming the RIGHTS OF JURORS as undoubted judges of the law as well as the fact, in order that this mode of trial may become, what it ought to be, “the principal bulwark of Liberty, &c. and a privilege of the highest and most beneficial nature.”†

9th. That this Society will likewise direct their attention to the attainment of full and unrestrained Liberty of the Press, and will industriously strive, for the acquisition of that perfect and universal privilege, in the expression of sentiments, on matters of Government and Religion, which is consistent with the free and liberal nature of the British Constitution.

* Vide the plan of Parliamentary Reform, adopted by the Westminster Association, &c.

† Blackstone's Com. b. 3. ch. 23.

10th. That these Resolutions are the effect of a serious and attentive consideration of the Subjects, and originate from the pure, ardent, and sincere wish, of securing the public happiness, and of promoting peace on earth and good-will towards men.

11th. That this Society have the warmest sentiments of veneration and regard, for those excellent and distinguished persons who have associated themselves, under the honourable name of "The Friends of the People;" and are anxious, in this public manner, to testify their attachment to the great cause which they have adopted.

12th. That for the attainment of the highly essential purposes before stated, this society will be ready to correspond and act in conjunction with the other Associations formed in Great-Britain, with these objects in view, in so far as they are influenced by the same calm and beneficent temper and conduct their deliberations and exertions, with that order and moderation, which are the distinguishing characteristics and the prominent features of the true Spirit of Liberty.

NUMBER XIX.

Paper I.

LETTER *addressed to the* FREEHOLDERS of YORK-
SHIRE *by the* Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING been appointed by you a Member of your Committee, and having been honoured with your confidence in a station of still greater trust, as Chairman of that Body, on each of these grounds I hold myself responsible to you for my conduct in every Political Transaction, in which it may be my fortune to take a part. In all such cases, my Constituents have a right to know what my actions have been, and what have been my reasons for acting.

But on the present occasion, I am free to own motives of prudence are combined with a sense of my duty to you. The correspondence I have held with the Volunteers of Ireland may be liable to MIS-REPRESENTATIONS as injurious to those generous Men as to myself.—Against these, the only means of protection is an unreserved disclosure of *all* my Letters to the Volunteers.—Anxious, also, as I am, not to forfeit your good opinion, I feel that I cannot be
happy

happy, even in your approbation, unless it be founded on a thorough knowledge of what I have done. To your inspection, therefore, I submit the following Papers; which contain the Queries proposed to me by the Volunteers of Ireland on the intended Reformation of the Parliament of that Kingdom, and the whole of my share in the subsequent correspondence to which that communication first gave rise.

The account given by the Volunteers of the Representation of the People of Ireland, exhibits abuses exactly similar to those which deform the Parliament of Britain; and which, if not corrected by National Interposition in each country, appear but too likely to increase; till they become the destruction of every valuable end for which Parliaments were originally ordained.

But mutilated as the British Constitution is, it still extends to the People Rights and Privileges of great efficacy for the preservation of LIBERTY. By a just and warrantable exercise of those Rights, it has been your endeavour to restore the Constitution, in some degree, to the vigour of its ancient State. And notwithstanding repeated disappointments, your hopes of success are not extinguished, your zeal is not abated; on the contrary, the Revolutions of this eventful year have only served to convince you more clearly that Reformation is necessary, and that, by a steady adherence to your pacific plan, it may finally be attained. Such were
your

your views in the formation of that Association, in whose prosecution you have persevered with a constant uniformity, with an active but well-governed zeal, which have gradually lessened the distrust and suspicion of your former opponents, and induced many of them, by an extraordinary effort of candour, to concur with you in supporting the objects of your plan.— These are acquisitions in which you well may triumph; they are the conquests of truth, integrity, and public spirit; they are victories, from which the victors and the vanquished will reap equal honour and equal advantage.

For myself, “while I have your approbation, “I stand pledged not to withdraw from the “Public Service;” and that approbation, I am persuaded, will only be given to a constant perseverance in your legal mode of interposition. “But whenever I shall see the grounds of the “Association shifted, and measures taken, that, “in my apprehension, probably will lead to violence and commotion; or whenever I shall “be convinced, from the disposition of the “country in general, or that of this County in “particular, that no Public Good is to be expected from perseverance; in each of these “cases I have pledged myself TO RETIRE.” These were my declarations at a late and at a former Meeting of the County of York; and permit me to assure you, these were not engagements slightly made, and meant as slightly to be broken; they were the effusion of sentiments which I had long conceived, and promises

misses to which my conduct must exactly correspond. By the breach of these engagements, or the uniform observance of them, my character will be determined in your judgment, either as A BAD CITIZEN—OR AS ONE, WHO IN TIMES OF NATIONAL DISTRESS AND ALARM ENDEAVOURED TO PREVENT COMMOTION, AND POINTED TO LAWFUL AND PACIFIC MEANS FOR PRESERVING THE LIBERTIES OF HIS COUNTRY.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

YORK, Dec. 30, 1783.

Paper II.

LETTER from the COMMITTEE of DELEGATES of the
Forty-five Corps of Volunteers of Ireland to the
REV. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

(C O P Y.)

A T a Meeting of the Committee of Correspondence, appointed by the Delegates of forty-five Volunteer Corps, assembled at Lisburn,
VOL. III. D on

on the 1st of July instant, held at Belfast the
19th of July, 1783.

Present, Lieutenant-Colonel SHARMAN,
in the Chair.

Ordered, That the following Letter, signed
by the Secretary in the name of this Committee,
be forwarded to the highly respected Rev. Mr.
Wyvill of Yorkshire, enclosing a copy of the
Resolutions of the Provincial Meeting of Volun-
teers of Munster, and of the proceedings of the
forty-five Volunteer Delegates, assembled at
Lisburn, on the 1st instant, respecting a Parlia-
mentary Reform; as also, a copy of the Circular
Letter written this day, by this Committee,
to the several Corps of this Province.

BELFAST, 19th July, 1783.

REVEREND SIR,

YOUR marked attachment to the Rights of
the People and the general prosperity of
the British Empire, induce us to address you on
the present great and momentous occasion.

The Spirit of Freedom which pervades all
ranks of People in Ireland, with the justice and
wise policy of the British Nation, having removed
for ever all possible cause of jealousy between
the Sister Kingdoms, and united us to Britain on
the Basis of equal Liberty and similar Constitu-
tion; it becomes the duty as it is the interest of
each Kingdom to assist the other, in their endea-
vours to restore to its antient purity and vigour,
a decayed

a decayed, enfeebled, and sickly Constitution. In both Nations it is now generally acknowledged that this great object can be attained by no other means but by a Reform of the Representation in Parliament. In England the measure has for the present miscarried, though supported by so many wise, honest, great, and independent Men, and by a vigorous and glorious exertion of many Shires, particularly that of York. We trust, however, it has miscarried only for a season, and that the next attempts will prove successful. Ireland has now taken up the idea, and if we shall be so happy as to see success crown our efforts, we think considerable weight will be thereby added to the endeavours of the Friends of the People in England; the People of the Two Nations united in pursuit of the same important object, must be not only powerful but irresistible. The enclosed Papers, which we request you may peruse, will shew how far this country has already gone in determining to procure a more equal Representation; the Unanimous Resolutions of about fifteen thousand Volunteers, already declared in a very few weeks, assure us that the resolves of the Delegates of Ulster, who are to assemble at Dunganon on the eighth of September next, will be no less unanimous; and we well know that what the Volunteers (vast numbers of whom are Freeholders) shall determine on, the other Freeholders and People in general, who are not Volunteers, will adopt and support, by every means in their power—the Aged Fathers can-

not differ from their Sons, respecting a matter on which depends every thing that they either hold dear for themselves or their posterity.

That you may see the very depraved state of our Representation, it is necessary to observe, that out of three hundred Members, of which our House of Commons consists, two hundred and twenty are returned by Boroughs; those one hundred and ten Boroughs are divided into three classes, 1st, Those where the Right of Election is vested in the Protestant inhabitants at large; 2d, Those where the Right of Election is vested in the Chief Magistrate, Burgesses, and Freemen; 3d, Those where the Right of Election is confined to the Chief Magistrate and Burgesses, frequently not more in number than five or six, and seldom exceeding ten or twelve. Almost all the Boroughs are either venal or corrupt, or implicitly obedient to the arbitrary will of their respective Landlords, who dictate to the Electors in the most absolute manner. Those Landlords claim, by prescription, a kind of property in the Boroughs, the patronage of which they transfer by sale, like an estate, and receive from eight to ten thousand pounds for a Borough. A seat for a Borough is generally sold for two thousand pounds, so that every seven or eight years a Borough brings in four thousand pounds to the Patron.

Unhappily for Ireland, our Counties also are too much governed by our Peers and Great Men, whose influence over many of their respective tenants is very great; and this consideration

deration has given rise here to a doubt in the minds of many well-meaning men as to the propriety of adding to the number of Knights of the Shire, as generally now two great families endeavour to divide between them the seats for the county; the others either remain neuter or join the independent interest. It is alledged, were there six seats in each county, six great families would divide them; and, against such a junction, the Independent Freeholders would not be able to make any effectual opposition. — May we now entreat you, as a most important favour conferred not only on us but on this kingdom, that you may be pleased to favour us with your sentiments and advice as to the best, the most eligible, and the most practicable mode of destroying, restraining, or counteracting this HYDRA OF CORRUPTION, BOROUGH-INFLUENCE; that we may be enabled to lay your opinion before the Provincial Assembly of Delegates at Dungannon; and as our last Meeting for arranging business previous thereto, is fixed to be on the 20th of August, we hope you will be so obliging as to forward your reply so as to be with us about that time. Many apologies are due for this long address, and for the very great trouble we have requested you to take; but we are young in Politics and wish for information from Men of more Wisdom, Experience, and Abilities. This, however, we may venture to assert, that if we can only be directed to the best mode, the Mass of the Inhabitants of Ireland is at this moment so com-

pletely alive and sensible to the necessity of a well-digested Reform, that there cannot remain a doubt, that what it attempts, in conjunction with the virtuous part of England, will be effectual. The several matters on which we have requested your opinion, are thrown into one view in the following Queries:

1st, In order to the Purity of Parliament, and to restore that Constitutional Controul which the Constituent Body should have over the Representative, Is it necessary that those Boroughs, in which the Right of Election is vested in a few, which, in general, are at the absolute disposal of one or two persons, should be disfranchised, and in their place the County Representatives increased?

2d, The Protestant Inhabitants consist of near one million, who return three hundred Members; would it be wise to increase the number of Representatives for the Kingdom at large?

3d, A plausible objection, mentioned above, has been raised against an increase of County Representatives; has that argument much weight? And if it has, is it remediable?

4th, Should the Right of Suffrage be extended? If it should, who are the proper objects of that extension?

5th, In order to guard against undue influence, would it be wise to have the Members returned by Ballot?

6th, Would not a limitation of the duration of Parliaments to a shorter term than eight years

years have excellent effect? And should it be less than triennial?

7th, If the abolition of the ENSLAVED Boroughs is necessary, would it be equitable or expedient that they should be purchased by the Nation?

8th, On the whole, what specific mode of Reform, in the Representation of Ireland, best suits your own ideas, considering the situation of this Country, and what are the steps which you conceive best adapted to effect that Reformation?

We request you may be so good to direct your answer to our Chairman, a Lieutenant-Colonel SHARMAN, Lisburn.

We have the honour to be,
With the most perfect respect,

Sir, your most obedient

And most humble servants.

Signed, by Order of Committee,

HENRY JOY, jun.

Secretary of the Forty-Five.

The Rev. Mr. WYLL, &c. &c.

Paper III.

LETTER by the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL to
HENRY JOY, JUN. ESQ.

BURTON-HALL, near BRIDLE, YORKSHIRE, Aug. 31. 1783.

SIR,

ON my return this day from London, I received your two letters, dated the 19th and 26th of July, stating gross abuses in the Representation of the People of Ireland, and proposing for my consideration Queries respecting the most adviseable mode of application for obtaining effectual redress. The Committee of Correspondence at Belfast, have done me great honour, by asking the opinion of so humble an individual on a subject of such extreme importance to the whole Irish Nation. I am truly sensible also, they may have consulted on this occasion, many persons in this Country, better qualified by their experience and superior abilities, to suggest advice which may deserve the attention of the proposed General Meeting of the Volunteer Delegates of Ulster. But neither that reflection, nor the present affliction of my mind from the recent loss of a very near relation, shall discourage me from communicating to the Committee at Belfast my sentiments without

out reserve. I hold it to be my duty as a MAN, much more as YOUR FELLOW SUBJECT, to contribute the best assistance in my power, Inconsiderable as it may be; to promote that political Reformation, without which the happiness of IRELAND cannot be secure. I undertake the performance of this duty with the zeal and alacrity of a most hearty friend; but since my answer is not desired at Belfast till the 20th instant, it will be deferred for some posts, in order that it may be formed on the fullest and most attentive consideration of the subject which I am able to give it.

I am, Sir with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

HENRY JOY jun. Esq;
Secretary of the Committee of
Correspondence at Belfast.

Paper VI.

LETTER by the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL to
Lieutenant Colonel SHARMAN.

BURTON-HALL, near BEDALL, Aug. 15, 1783.

SIR,

THE inclosed paper contains my answer to the Queries which the Committee of Correspondence at Belfast, have done me the honour

to propose for my consideration. I beg the favour that you will take the earliest opportunity to lay it before the Committee.

I am, with the greatest respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Lieutenant Colonel SHARMAN,

Chairman of the Committee

of Correspondence at Belfast.

Paper VI.

Mr. Wyvill's Answer to the Queries proposed to

him by the Committee of Correspondence at

Belfast.

IN all attempts by a Free People to improve

the frame of their Legislature, it seems ad-

viseable, as much as may be possible, to pre-

serve antient foundations; and to suffer every

part of the fabric to stand, which is not abso-

lutely incapable of substantial repair. In my

opinion it is unnecessary and inexpedient to

disfranchise the populous Boroughs in Ireland,

in

in which the Right of Election is vested in a few persons. In such Boroughs, a due extension of the Right of Suffrage is sufficient to obtain every desirable purpose—but all the little depopulated Boroughs ought certainly to be disfranchised, and their privilege of Parliamentary Representation should be transferred to those populous Districts which are unrepresented, or whose share of Representation is inadequate.

2. If in consequence of the proposed disfranchisement of the smallest class of Boroughs, a sufficient share of the Representation can be transferred to the larger districts, it does not seem necessary that the number of the Irish House of Commons should be increased. The Liberty of the Nation may be well protected by a House of Commons, whose Members do not exceed three hundred, if those Members be firmly connected with the Body of the Nation. But if from the paucity of Boroughs proper to be disfranchised, or from the influence of powerful Men interested to preserve such Boroughs, a sufficient share of the Representation cannot be transferred to the larger districts; the present number of the House of Commons in Ireland, compared with the elective Body, is by no means so large as to forbid any addition of Members. For what secures a Parliament in the interest of the Public? DUE ELECTION, AND A SPEEDY RETURN INTO THE COMMON MASS. A Senate thus constituted would instantly feel what the community felt, and faithfully act according to

to the wishes of their Constituents. These are the essential requisites in the formation and conduct of a House of Commons, and where they are found, it is of little moment whether the Assembly consist of three hundred persons, or of any larger number not exceeding those limits, beyond which it is not easy to preserve order in a deliberative Assembly. On these grounds, it may be presumed, that no solid objection to an augmentation of the Irish House of Commons could be offered, even if the present Elective Body were incapable of increase: But since the time is perhaps arrived, or may not be very distant, when the Catholics of Ireland might be safely admitted to a participation in the Right of Election, the difficulty wholly vanishes.

3. Where property is very unequally distributed, Aristocratical Influence will be found to operate extensively; and no means can be devised completely to guard the community against the mischievous consequences of that influence, without a breach of the laws of property, which hardly ever can be justifiable. But regulations may be framed, by which the danger from an excessive power in the Aristocracy may be averted, and, in some tolerable degree, that share of influence may be obtained by the People, without which they cannot possess a free Constitution, or have any substantial security that the true interests of the Nation will be steadily pursued by Government. Laws extending the Right of Suffrage to fit classes of Men—prohibiting
bribery

bribery and expence of Elections—and facilitating the Voters access to the place of polling—these are the most obvious and effectual means by which the Commons may be protected against a domineering Aristocracy, without recurring to the desperate expedient of an Agrarian Law. And since the Counties of Ireland are inadequately represented, and since the natural luxury of the rich, and the growing industry of the poor, will combine to lessen the evil complained of, it seems adviseable that the County-Representation should be reinforced; and at the same time, that every proper regulation to check the excess of Aristocratical Influence should be introduced.

4. The fourth Query has been in some measure answered in reply to the third. It seems not to admit a doubt that the Right of Suffrage should be extended in Ireland—but the difficult part of the question is, TO WHOM? Conscious as I am how delicate the subject is, I cannot however decline to give my sentiments upon it with plainness and unreserved sincerity.

It is the Right of Mankind to be governed by their own consent, given personally, or by Representation. On this principle, all just Government has been originally formed. It was the principle on which our Saxon Ancestors founded their Constitution; and though it must be admitted, that from the first introduction of a Deputed Assembly of the People in England, the principle never was strictly adhered

hered to, and that in fact the Right of Election was not universally enjoyed, even before the Statute of Disfranchisement, passed in the eighth year of Henry VI. yet the principle was still appealed to, and, by a LEGAL FICTION, supposed to exist in practice. Such was the happy equality of mankind in the earlier stages of society; ill exchanged, in my opinion, for the glare and glitter of a more splendid scene, where the loss of the Political Happiness of the MANY is poorly compensated by the pomp and magnificence of a FEW INDIVIDUALS.

In countries where property is equally divided, or nearly so, it can hardly be supposed that the unlimited Right of Suffrage may not be established. If such an exception to all Political Experience should occur, the circumstances which could occasion the limitation must be of a very extraordinary nature: But in States where property has been distributed with considerable inequality, some diminution of popular privileges has usually taken place—and in far the greatest part of the GLOBE, where the extremes of riches and poverty almost divide each community, those privileges have been trampled under the feet of their tyrannical rulers, and scarcely a vestige of them is to be found. Even in these free countries of Ireland and Britain, there seems to have been a culpable propensity to contract those Rights to a degree for which there was no sufficient reason. The interests of mankind require that the basis of Society should be

be broad : The rules of Justice require that their natural Rights should not be taken away, but upon proof of misusage or Political Delinquency. I am satisfied, therefore, that where the right of Universal Suffrage has not been found actually inconsistent with the public safety, it ought not to be abridged. But in all cases where the claims of individuals are incompatible with the general good, the privileges of a part of the Community must be postponed to the welfare of the whole. For the Law of self-preservation is to Societies as it is to individuals, an indefeazable Law ; and by that Law Societies are justifiable which eject from the full enjoyment of the Rights of Citizens, persons to whom those Rights could not be continued without danger to the Public. The Election Franchise may be considered as both a Privilege and a Trust ; and Men who have been found incapable of executing that trust in a manner not disadvantageous to the community, are unfit to remain invested with it. That trust may be as properly taken from such Men, as by the concession of the Advocates for its widest extension it may be withheld from Women, Minors, and Persons of some other descriptions. But Men, from whom this franchise has been taken, ought to be permitted to renounce their allegiance to the State, and to transfer it to another. If in that case they acquiesced under the deprivation without renouncing their allegiance to the State or even expressing any dissatisfaction, their acquiescence would amount to a tacit acceptance

ceptance of virtual Representation; and they would still be governed, as they ought to be, by their own consent.

In Communities, in which this deprivation has already taken place, similar reasoning will determine to what classes of men the Election Franchise ought to be restored, or may justly be refused. It ought to be restored to all who may be reasonably expected to exercise it for the Public good. This is indisputably clear; and it seems equally certain that it may be justly refused to all to whom it would be unsafe to impart it; whom candour would judge most likely to misuse their privilege, and to be guilty of that political delinquency for which their original deprivation would be justifiable.

These observations are alike applicable to the case of Britain and of Ireland. In both Countries numerous classes of men have been deprived of this Franchise. But the liberal temper of the times, aided in each by some favourable concomitant circumstances, has brought this question to a serious discussion; what Restoration of the Right of Election ought to be proposed, or is fit to be established? The mere inequality of property alone, is by no means a valid objection to the most extensive restoration. For if from the love of Order, Justice and Liberty prevalent in the lower classes, and the meek and unambitious spirit of their superiors, no material danger were to be apprehended from the influence of a wealthy Aristocracy, or from numerous and frequent Assemblies of the
 Populace;

Populace; in such circumstances, notwithstanding the unequal division of property, the right of suffrage might be safely restored to the excluded classes, and therefore it ought not to be refused.

Whether Ireland be a Country thus fortunately circumstanced, or not, it behoves the Delegates of Ulster to consider with strict impartiality. In what degree the manners of the Irish People are corrupt, to what extent the Property of their Country is unequally distributed, the Delegates will be most competent to judge. But if Aristocratical Power be found too predominant in the Counties of Ireland, under the present limitations of the Right of Election; as it is stated to be in the Letter of the 19th of July by the Committee of Belfast, the extension of that Right to Persons in a situation of absolute dependence on the Great, would render their Power wholly irresistible. If the Capital contain a numerous and profligate populace, the periodical Assembly of that populace for the purpose of Elections, would too probably produce tumults and all the wild and pernicious effects of frantic insurrection. Evils like these would be more intolerable than those abuses which are now so justly complained of; and unless some effectual remedy were speedily applied to them would lead Ireland through a series of fatal calamities, to the utter ruin of its Constitution.

Presuming Ireland to be a Country nearly in this situation, I cannot venture to recommend the restoration of universal suffrage. In my opinion, the circumstances here described must be considerably altered, before the refusal of that unlimited Privilege can be thought unjust. At present, the utmost length to which the Right of Election there seems safely communicable, is to impart it to every class of men, who, from the possession of property to some small amount, may be thought likely to exercise their franchise freely, and for the Public good. To concede the Right of Suffrage in Ireland beyond that boundary, appears not consistent with National prudence, or the safety of the Public; and therefore, in my apprehension, is not required by Justice. In this opinion I am countenanced by the general practice of the Free States of Antiquity; I am supported by that of modern Europe, and the more recent example of America. In the American Republics, property is more equally divided, and the manners of the People are more simple, orderly, and incorrupt than they are in these Kingdoms; and yet, in them, some qualification of property has been thought necessary to intitle Inhabitants to the Right of Voting. In Massachusetts, and some other American States, the Landed Qualification exceeds that of an English Freeholder. I should be still farther confirmed in these sentiments, if the excluded classes discovered no anxiety to regain this important privilege, even when it became

became the object of National Debate. For why should the work of Political Reformation be loaded with great, and, perhaps, insurmountable difficulties, by struggling to impart to the Non-Electors a Franchise which they are neither likely to exercise with discretion, nor solicitous to obtain?

By the rule here suggested, all Persons paying Taxes within the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs of Ireland would be comprehended among their Voters; and to the County-Electors also would be added Persons holding Land by Copyhold, by Leasehold for Life, or a Term exceeding thirty years, equal in value to the present Freehold Qualification.

By the same rule it is understood, that CATHOLICS of similar qualifications in property, would be admitted to the choice of Representatives, together with their PROTESTANT BRETHREN. It must be confessed that this concession to Humanity and Liberal Policy, could not be proposed in Britain with any prospect of success. But Ireland by granting a complete toleration to Catholics, has displayed the true spirit of candour and equity. And on this great occasion of reforming its Constitution, the same equitable spirit will naturally lead that Country not to exclude those men from the primary Right of Citizens, by whose assistance its own independence and dignity were obtained. The Catholics of former generations may have been justly degraded from the Class of Electors; because an

ATTACHMENT to a FOREIGN POTENTATE, dangerous to the Peace and Welfare of their Country, may then have formed an essential part of their religious Creed. But why should Men, whose religious opinions are now deemed inoffensive to the State, and therefore fit to be tolerated by Law, be thought unfit to concur with their Fellow-Citizens in the Election of Representatives? The established Religion would be secure as it is at present; because Catholic Voters could not elect Catholic Legislators. However their mode of Christianity may be disapproved, however necessary it may be to oppose the re-admission of that system, as the Religion of our Country; and no person disapproves it more completely, or would resist its re-establishment more strenuously than the writer of this Paper; yet surely in matters of merely Civil Concern, the profession of errors acknowledged to be harmless to the State, ought not to be a disqualification. Surely Christians of every sect may be admitted to enjoy those political privileges, from which persons untinctured by any Religion are not excluded. If on this occasion the Right of Suffrage should be extended to Catholics, let them receive the indulgence, not from the insidious clemency of a Court, but from the friendship and magnanimity of their Protestant Fellow-Subjects, and the Peace, the Liberty of Ireland will be unhurt by the concession.

5. Elections by Ballot seem to be unadvisable. In places where no undue influence can be exerted,

exerted, the concealment of the Ballot is totally unnecessary. But where that Influence is predominant, it ought to be resisted, not by a practice encouraging cowardly dissingenuity, and breach of promise; but by open and honourable means; by means consonant with Truth, Integrity, and the courageous spirit of Liberty.

6. The duration of Parliaments ought to be limited to a shorter term than eight years. If it should be found as practicable to obtain Annual as Triennial Parliaments, the preference in point of efficacy seems due to Annual Parliaments. But the beneficial effects of Triennial, or of Annual Parliaments will not be so sensibly felt, till the Representation has been meliorated, and Elections have been rendered incorrupt and unexpensive.

7. It would be expedient that a satisfactory compensation should be given by the Nation to the Proprietors of those Boroughs which may be abolished. If this were understood to be the intention of the Public, a less animated opposition to the disfranchisement of Boroughs might be expected. But a more harsh mode of Reformation would disgust and exasperate Individuals; which would be extremely imprudent, when an expence, slight to a whole kingdom, might purchase their acquiescence, and preserve general harmony. Undoubtedly, a compensation is what strict justice does not enjoin; the Nation has an absolute right to revoke Privileges

which are become injurious to its welfare ; but in the view of equity, as well as that of policy, this more lenient mode of correcting abuses which time may have introduced, without any marked criminality of the present Proprietors, seems to be preferable.

8. From the answers which have been returned to the former Queries, my opinion respecting the eighth and last Query, in some measure might be collected. But the reply to the most important question of them all shall not be less explicit than those which have been already given. If then I had the honour to be delegated to attend the Meeting at Dungannon, my present ideas on the subject would lead me

1st, To recommend with all possible earnestness, the Abolition of every small and decayed Borough, and the gift of a reasonable compensation to every person immediately affected by that act ; with permission to the disfranchised Electors to vote at Elections for their respective Counties :

2d, To propose the re-inforcement of the Representation by transferring to the Counties, the Capital, and considerable unrepresented Towns, if there be any such in Ireland, the Members taken from the disfranchised Boroughs ; and also by adding to them as many new Members as might be necessary clearly to turn the balance of Legislative Power in favour of the Counties, principal Cities, and Towns, which form the
Body

Body of the Nation, and in which the strength of the Irish Democracy resides ;

3d, To suggest the utility of extending the Right of Suffrage to all Persons paying taxes in the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs ; to all Copyholders and Leaseholders for life, or a term exceeding thirty years, the yearly value of whose estates shall be at least forty shillings ; and also the propriety of admitting Christians of every denomination to the equal exercise of that most important Right of a Citizen :

4th, To advise a shorter duration of Parliaments, preferring Annual Parliaments to Triennial, if equally attainable :

5th, And for securing the advantages of these measures in their full extent, to recommend the strictest prohibition of bribery and expence at Elections, and regulations facilitating to the respective Voters the exercise of their franchise :

Such are the improvements which appear to my mind, most practicable, safe, and efficacious, in the present State of Ireland, to restore to THE PEOPLE UNARMED, THEIR JUST AND NECESSARY CONTROUL OVER THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY. To some of the Delegates at Dungannon, these propositions might appear not extensive enough.— To many more, perhaps, they might seem too extensive to be at once adopted with prudence, Having, therefore, offered these propositions to the Meeting, I should think it ill became me to

adhere to them with pertinacity. On the contrary, it would be more suitable to my very limited experience and imperfect knowledge of Irish affairs, and also more conducive to the success of the Great Cause, to submit my opinion with deference to better informed judgments; and to accede to a less extensive plan for a substantial Reformation of Parliament, in favour of which a more general concurrence of the Volunteers might be probable. For that is the best Plan of Reformation, which is the most effectual that is likely to be attained.

The means for obtaining those regulations, or other improvements which may be deemed more salutary, are sufficiently obvious. To restore a declining Constitution, is the duty, the interest, and the peculiar office of the Collective Body. Self-Reformation is an odious task to corrupt Assemblies of Men, as it is to profligate individuals. A degenerate Parliament will never seriously engage in that business, but from the impulse of the People. By their active zeal the work of Reformation must be begun—by their firmness and perseverance it must be finished. In a more tolerable condition of Parliament it would be sufficient to state an abuse, and of its own accord an honest House of Commons would immediately apply the proper correction: But when the mischief lies in the frame and disposition of Parliament itself, it behoves the People not only to specify their grievance, but to point out on what principle,
and

and to what extent they expect redress. For if the popular complaint be well founded, Parliament cannot be qualified to judge for the People with due impartiality, nor disposed spontaneously to grant that mode of Reformation which may appear best adapted to promote their happiness. Hence proceeds the principal difficulty of this great enterprize. When the claim of independence was the object of pursuit, there was but one simple proposition before each Provincial Meeting; and in that proposition every Irishman was agreed. If the Volunteer Assemblies should deliberate apart on the general question only, whether a Reformation of Parliament be expedient, there is little reason to apprehend any material diversity of opinion would arise. But if the question to be considered, should be, what specific plan of Reformation is most fit to be proposed to Parliament?—The discussion of that proposition, in many distinct Assemblies, might unhappily divide the Volunteers. The Reformation of Parliament is an ample field of speculation, in which the sentiments of wise and good Men may be widely different: It is a subject of the highest practical importance on which those various sentiments may be maintained with warmth and eagerness. In the progress of those disputes the Provincial Meetings might form different opinions—they might be heated—they might be alienated—the ill offices of artful and interested Men might increase the disgust, till the
 formation

formation of a General Union in favour of any specific Plan, would become exceedingly difficult if not wholly impracticable. In order to guard against so fatal a disunion, it seems advisable, if the specific Plan ought to originate from the People, that A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES from every part of Ireland should meet, and determine what that specific Plan should be. By such a Meeting, the Union of the Volunteers might be completely preserved; and the application from THAT Meeting for an effectual Redress of Parliamentary Abuses would be presented to Parliament with the weight and authority of the whole Collective Body. It is needless to add that their requisition must be complied with.

Such is the judgment which I have formed on the most impartial consideration of the Queries transmitted for my opinion by the Committee of Belfast. I feel myself much honoured by the Gentlemen who have called forth my sentiments on this momentous occasion; by imposing that honourable task upon me, they have committed to my hands an important trust, which I am bound to execute with scrupulous fidelity, with conscientious sincerity. I am but too well convinced that what I have been able to suggest, deserves not much of their attention. But the opinion now given has been formed and delivered under a sense of duty. And if this communication offer nothing else which may be fortunate enough to meet their approbation,

bation, yet I am confident the Delegates of Ulster will approve the freedom and integrity of my answer.

As a MAN I sincerely wish the enjoyment of Liberty, in its most ample extent, to MEN in every climate and country; but as a fellow-subject I am deeply and more peculiarly interested in the welfare and happiness of IRISH-MEN. When the Volunteers of Ireland successfully asserted the honour and independence of their country, I rejoiced at its emancipation from an injurious controul. When they abolished persecution, and gave peace and security to millions of their oppressed brethren, my heart concurred and approved the deed. When they checked the corrupt profusion of the Public Money, I joined with every virtuous man in applauding this prelude to a more important Reformation. To restore a sinking Constitution is their last and greatest labour. It is a task, whose difficulty can only be exceeded by the immense advantage resulting from the performance. Nothing else can give permanent security to the freedom and prosperity of Ireland. When the zeal and spirit by which the Volunteers gained those benefits to their country, shall be relaxed, unless a Radical Reformation of Parliament shall have been first accomplished, the benefits themselves will not be of long duration: They will be lost again, or they will be left under circumstances of Public Distress, in which enjoyment will be impossible. The mis-
chiefs

chiefs of a factious and corrupt Government will be felt once more—Ministerial Profusion will again seduce the Senate and impoverish the Community. In this state of things, Liberty will be precarious, and Commerce and Industry will be undone. And then, when the poor Catholic is starving for want of employment, Toleration itself will be to him a comfort of little avail. Even the joy excited in the public mind by the acquisition of Independence will soon sink and be lost in the superior sense of domestic misery. But I trust a different, and a far happier scene, is just ready to open upon Ireland. From the vigour and virtue of the Irish people, conducted by the wisdom of their Delegates, a substantial Reformation of Parliament, with every national blessing in its train, may soon be expected. Let them but persevere in the same spirited, temperate, and legal conduct which hitherto has marked their character with honour—let them be firm—let them be unanimous—and in this just and necessary undertaking, as in all the rest, **THE VOLUNTEERS OF IRELAND** will command that success which they so well deserve.

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Paper IV.

BURTON-HALL, near BEDALL, Aug. 21, 1783.

SIR,

ACcording to your desire, my answer to the Queries of the Committee of Correspondence at Belfast, was transmitted to Lieutenant-Colonel Sharman at Lisburn on the 15th inst. But wishing to guard against a miscarriage, which in the hurry of a General Election may be possible, I take the liberty to trouble you with a duplicate of my answer.

The Committee of Yorkshire is expected to meet about the end of September, when your letters, and the other papers communicated by your respectable Committee, will be laid before the Yorkshire Gentlemen. I am firmly persuaded they will rejoice at the noble spirit of Reformation which has arisen in Ireland; they will sincerely wish to their worthy fellow-subjects complete success: I trust also, they will be most ready to co-operate with them in any legal mode which can be devised, mutually to assist each other, in the laudable and necessary undertaking to obtain a substantial Reformation of Parliament, in the respective kingdoms of Ireland and Great Britain.

I am, SIR, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

HENRY JOY, Esq;

C. WYVILL.

Secretary to the Committee of
Correspondence at Belfast.

Paper V.

Paper V.

SIR,

BURTON-HALL, October 11, 1783.

AFTER having transacted the business which the Meeting at York on the first inst. had intrusted to my care, I take the earliest opportunity to acknowledge your favour of the 12th of September; and to offer to your respectable Committee the inclosed explanation of my sentiments, regarding the re-admission of Catholics to the Right of Suffrage.

The papers which I have had the honour to receive from you, together with my replies, were laid before the Yorkshire Committee on the first instant; and although no formal resolution was passed upon the occasion, yet the communication was received with every mark of cordiality; and I should not do justice to their sentiments if I did not represent the Yorkshire Gentlemen as zealous well-wishers to the legal exertions of the people of Ireland, for the **RESTORATION** of their **CONSTITUTION**.

For myself, I do most sincerely rejoice at the wise measures adopted by the Meeting at DUNGANNON on the eighth of September. I trust they will secure unanimity to the Volunteers of Ireland, and enable the National Convention, with ease and regularity, to accomplish a safe, but radical Reformation of the Irish Parliament.

I am, SIR, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

HENRY JOY, jun. Esq.

C. WYVILL.

Paper VI.

POSTSCRIPT to *Mr. WYVILL'S ANSWER to the
QUERIES, &c.*

IT seems to be admitted in Ireland, that the Right of Suffrage ought to be extended to Men of every class and denomination, as far as the Public Safety will conveniently allow. But the Volunteers of Ulster, when they resolved to stop there, acted with much wisdom; at least in my opinion, to pass that limit would not be magnanimity—it would be indiscretion and temerity.

From the first communication of the Committee of Belfast, it had been collected that the Catholics of Ireland out-number the Protestants, in the proportion of two to one; but the weight of property in the Protestant scale was conceived to exceed that of the Catholics in a much greater proportion. Hence the supposition that the Right of voting might be granted alike to Catholics and Protestants, of a certain qualification in property, without transferring to Catholics an influence in Elections that would be dangerous to the State. It is extremely probable that this calculation may be erroneous; but fortunately, an effectual method has been taken by the Meeting at DUN-
GANNON

GANNON to procure authentic information on the Subject, to be laid before the intended NATIONAL CONVENTION : For if on a question of such infinite-importance, a doubt remain on the minds of liberal and enlightened men, that doubt ought to be cleared up in a satisfactory manner. When the proportion between the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland shall be ascertained by accurate estimates of their comparative numbers and opulence, then it may be determined with due precision, how far the Right of Suffrage may be safely extended.

That no extension of that Right can be safe, which would give to this sect of Christians a PARLIAMENT AT THEIR DEVOTION, seems too evident to need any discussion. I shall not scruple to add, that in my judgement, no extension of it can be safe, which by placing Protestants and Catholics on nearly a level situation of power, would open a prospect to Catholics of the future re-establishment of their mode of religion. That would tend directly to revive those religious animosities, and to excite that spirit of rivalry and eager contention, which, in the last century, distracted these islands ; and which, after having deluged them both with blood, at last, were happily calmed and soothed into tranquillity under a Protestant System of Government. The maintenance of that establishment is the interest of every friend to the peace of these Kingdoms ; in
that

that more especially, which in the principles and practice of toleration has taken a noble lead: And every well-wisher to the perpetual CONNECTION of Ireland and Britain, on the footing of EQUAL LIBERTY, under the same Prince, and similar Constitutions, and if possible, to their still closer UNION, must be anxious to guard against events, by which that UNION may be impeded, or that CONNECTION may be infringed. It might be invidious, and it is certainly superfluous to enlarge upon these reasons for a cautious re-admission of Catholics to the Right of Voting. But having acknowledged the necessity of this caution, I wish to exhort the Volunteers of ULSTER not to be deterred by vain, imaginary fears—but to impart to their Catholic Brethren, the Right of Citizens, in that degree which may now be safely communicable—and so to extend their Concessions hereafter, as future experience may prove to be compatible with the Peace, the Liberty, and the established Government of Ireland.

I cannot close this paper, without declaring my conviction, that the measures which have been hitherto adopted by the popular Meetings in Ireland and Britain, for the recovery of their respective Rights, are strictly conformable to Law and the Constitution. But however legal or constitutional they may be, they are unusual measures, out of the ordinary course of the Constitution, and only fit to be resorted to in cases of great necessity. If, therefore,

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by this extraordinary interposition, a substantial Renovation of the Constitution shall be obtained either in Ireland or in Britain, it will be expedient, in my judgment, that no farther concessions from Parliament be pressed, in this mode, by the Collective Body in either this or that kingdom, till the effect of the new Regulations shall have been fairly tried; and popular interference shall have been found once more to be indispensably necessary.

In Britain, my opinion to this effect has been already declared; and I should be much deficient in the candour and fidelity which are due from me to the Volunteers of Ulster, if adhering too scrupulously to the letter of their Queries, I should decline to offer to their consideration, what, perhaps, may be materially conducive to the Peace and Happiness of their Country.

C. WYVILL.

Paper VII.

LETTER *from the* REV. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL
to Lieutenant Colonel SHARMAN.

BURTON-HALL, November 13, 1783.

SIR,

I AM much honoured by your letter of October 11, conveying to me the Thanks of the
Ulster

Ulster Committee of Correspondence, for Communications which they are pleased to think useful, on the subject of a Parliamentary Reform. I beg leave to trouble you, to assure the Committee, I value their approbation very highly; and I shall ever consider it as one of the happy circumstances of my life, that in their opinion, I have been able to contribute, in however small a degree, to the promotion of IRISH LIBERTY.

I have read, with singular satisfaction, the accompanying account of the proceedings at Dungannon, and the Specific Plan which is intended to be laid before the NATIONAL CONVENTION, now assembled at DUBLIN. For the result of the Deliberations of that Meeting I look with a confident expectation of success, but not unmixed with anxiety. The interposition of the People by an extraordinary National Delegation, though perfectly legal and regular, and absolutely necessary to restore their Free Constitution, is yet a new and an untried measure; for the right conduct of which, PRECEDENT can furnish no assistance. But without laying too much stress on the difficulties which may arise from chance, or the artful management of Men who are secret enemies to the Reformation of Parliament, I cannot consider the mere magnitude of the undertaking without solicitude.— On the wisdom and moderation of the Delegates depend not only the Liberties of Ireland, but in some measure the reputation and success of popular

pular Assemblies in Britain, and in other Countries, in times, perhaps, far beyond the age in which we live. Hence, on this momentous occasion, anxious thoughts will unavoidably occur; but when I recollect the prudence and vigour displayed by the Volunteers in the course of their arduous struggle for the Public Weal; when I consider the justice of their claims, and the unanimity which appears to pervade the General Body, my apprehensions vanish; and the success of the NATIONAL CONVENTION seems not to admit a doubt.

That the event may happily correspond with this expectation is the fervent wish and prayer of,
SIR,

Your most obedient humble servant,
C. WYVILL.

Lieutenant-Colonel SHARMAN.

Paper VIII.

LETTER *from the* Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL
to Lieutenant-Colonel SHARMAN.

BURTON-HALL, December 2, 1783.

SIR,

I FIND it necessary to guard against mis-representation by publishing all my letters addressed

dressed, through Lieutenant-Colonel SHARMAN
 and YOURSELF, to the Committee at Belfast.—
 But before the publication of these papers I wish
 to know, whether the Committee have any ob-
 jection to the appearance of their part of the
 Correspondence at the same time. By an un-
 reserved disclosure of the whole Correspondence,
 our views and intentions will be more distinctly
 understood, and the means of fixing injurious
 imputations on the Committee or myself, will
 be more effectually removed. For these reasons,
 I wish to publish my letters, accompanied by
 the papers which I have had the honour to re-
 ceive from your respectable Committee. But
 if in their opinion, inconveniences which are
 not foreseen by me, might result from the pro-
 duction of their letters, I trust they will consider
 this request as instantly withdrawn.

I am, SIR, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

HENRY JOY, jun. Esq; Belfast.

Paper IX.

ACCOUNT of the DUNGANNON MEETING of the
 8th September, 1783.

AT half past twelve, the Committee of Cor-
 respondence having taken their places,
 F 3 the

the remaining Delegates, to the number at least 500, from 278 Corps of Volunteers, were admitted by ticket into the lower part of the Dissenting Meeting-House; an amazing croud of ladies and gentlemen occupying the galleries.

Colonel JAMES STEWART, with unanimous consent, was called to the Chair, who opened the business by reading the Call of the 45 Corps met at Lisburn 1st July last; and their Address to the Province, which had confined itself to the single point of a more equal Representation of the People in the Parliament of Ireland.

Before the business of the day was entered into, the Chairman read a Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Debbs, claiming his Seat as the Representative of a Volunteer Company. Before the question on his request was put, it was explained to comprehend the idea whether the Assembly of Volunteer Delegates, could not with propriety debate with any fencible officer. The question thus explained and carried unanimously was, that the consideration of the letter be postponed till the second day of the Meeting.

This matter being carried with a shew of spirit, and happy preface of coincidence of opinion, a venerable old Gentleman, Mr. STEWART of Killymoon, arose, and in a tremulous voice, expressive of fire and good sense, and a warm heart to the glorious business of the day, urged the necessity of that Assembly discovering in their conduct the most complete unanimity;

as such a line of conduct must infallibly lead to success.—The reverend Figure from whom this animated address came, and the manner of it, were felt by every person present, and did not a little tend to promote the perfect union which characterised the glorious proceedings of the day.

The Committee of Correspondence, through their Chairman and Secretary, read a Report of their Proceeding, in which it appeared that they had opened a correspondence with a number of the First Characters in England; and had received answers fraught with most important information—all of which expressed the utmost zeal and certainty of success in the great undertaking. It appeared also that the vast and populous County of York, in England, that has made such noble struggles in a Parliamentary Reform, had, in consequence of the spirited conduct of Ulster and Munster, called a Meeting for the close of the present month, in order that the zeal of the two Kingdoms, operating at the same time, may level every difficulty, and restore the Representation of the People to that purity, without which, to use the words of the Ulster Address to the three other Provinces, *the unanimated forms of a free Constitution would be a curse; and life itself cease to be a blessing.* Such ardour has that Country discovered already, that the Society for Constitutional Knowledge, composed of the best and some of the most illustrious Characters in Britain, have published the Address

of the Forty-Five Corps to Ulster in the public prints, and circulated copies of it gratis over that extensive Kingdom, in order to excite a similar spirit to that which promises such glorious effects in this.

The Report being closed, the Committee proceeded to lay before the Assembly a System of Ideas on the subject of Reform, and proposed them, paragraph by paragraph; all of which were with very few alterations in point of expression unanimously carried. (*See the Resolves at large, hereafter.*)

The BISHOP of DERRY, who was a Delegate from the Derry Corps, made a very eminent figure in the debate, till seized with a gouty complaint, he was under the necessity of retiring. His first essay was adjusting some historical facts relative to the early state of the Representation of the Commons after the Norman Conquest, in which he exhibited admirable quickness and perspicuity.—But in consequence of its being urged in the course of debate, that “as the object of the Meeting was a Reform of “the Commons’ House of Parliament, the interference of the Peerage was informal and unnecessary;” he delivered one of the most animated and interesting orations that we remember to have heard. He avowed that he was not afraid to say that he preferred that Meeting as a faithful, honest, and spirited Representation of the People, to every other Meeting or Senate he was

was acquainted with in either kingdom; and in the close of his speech, he drew a very mortifying picture of the present state of the House of Lords. He declared the highest reverence for the Volunteers, their permanence and their objects; but defied the most spirited among them to point out a length for the service and dignity of this Kingdom, to which he would not lead or follow. He concluded by saying, that he would prefer an opportunity of serving Ireland in the National Convention of Volunteer Delegates, or even in the very lowest of their Committees, to any other mode of doing it in any other Assembly.

His Speech was received with universal and marked applause, soon after which he retired from the Meeting; having been seized with a slight gouty complaint which has since we find subsided.

The Meeting of the 8th September, as far as property and rank constitute it, was more splendid and great than any of the former ones.—There were present as Delegates acting under the instructions of their Corps, fifteen Members of the new Parliament, besides several in the galleries.

That eminent and unrivalled Senator in point of ability, Henry Flood, being deputed by the Belfast First Company, of which he is an honorary Member, had travelled 120 miles to attend in his place, and comply with the written orders of his Corps;—but was stopt in his progress

gress by a violent gouty complaint, within a few miles of Dungannon. The Assembly was thereby, it is to be presumed, deprived of a display of that profound knowledge, and unequalled eloquence that have so often arrested the attention of the Irish Senate; has brought conviction home to a whole nation; and has been a mean of procuring for Ireland an acknowledgement of its independency as a State.

The aggregate number of Volunteers represented at the Meeting, was not less than eighteen thousand—whose real sentiments were conveyed with a degree of integrity and faithfulness which in more formal Meetings may be expected in vain. When we reflect on the mode of Delegation which was by written instructions from every Company, a truer mirror of their wishes cannot be desired, when we consider that out of nine Counties, Fermanagh and Cavan were in the heat of contested Elections and Down only just recovering from the fatigue of one, and in the moment of her assizes, with the additional circumstance of the extreme badness of the weather for the two preceding days, the Meeting must be considered as one of the most august and respectable that perhaps has ever been experienced in any age or nation. Had not these circumstances interfered, it is alledged, and with much shew of truth, that from 23,000 to 25,000 men, would that day have been represented.

After

After the matter proposed by the Committee of Correspondence had been adopted, a Member of the Committee arose and read a motion in favour of a Declaration of Rights, expounding the Constitution of Ireland, in order, as it expressed, that Irishmen should not have to seek for an acknowledgment of their independency in the Journals of a Foreign State. In a spirited debate on the question, every Speaker discovered a marked regard for a measure that from late transactions must naturally take place during the course of the ensuing Session of Parliament, but objected to the use of its being then declared by a Resolution of that Assembly; for the following reasons, viz.—That the call of the Meeting having limited the object to the single point of a more equal Representation of the Commons, their Companies had therefore given no instructions on that head, and that they could not consistently act under that circumstance;—others alledged that it was already so generally the sense of Volunteers, that a notice of it in that place was unnecessary: but the leading feature of objection was, that were the Assembly to deviate in the smallest degree from the express words of the call, a door would be opened for the discussion of a multiplicity of inferior points, which could not be excluded but on the general principle of an exclusion of all matters save the one object of the call. The motion was, on these grounds, very cheerfully withdrawn by the mover.

The

The Chairman, whose conduct did him in the opinion of every person present infinite honour, left the chair, and Mr. ROBERT STEWART of Newtown-Ards, the late Member for the County of Down was called to it. The approbation by the Ulster Volunteer Army of this Gentleman was expressed with the utmost degree of vehemence, by every Delegate present. Instantly on his taking the chair, a Gentleman from a remote part of the province, whose voice could scarcely be heard, used the words, "a cheer for Robert Stewart," instantly on which the House refounded with three cheers, succeeded by such a rage of applause, that some time elapsed before the Assembly could be brought to a proper state for returning to business:—a more glorious incitement to the virtue of a Senator could not be offered, than this honourable testimony of the veneration of a Province.

The Meeting broke up after nine at night: the whole business being concluded. Many Assemblies have been seen passing Resolutions with cold unanimity; but such a degree of calm deliberation in debate; and of universal enthusiasm when each question was put—marked the proceedings of the day, as would convince every observer of human affairs, that an event honourable in the highest degree to the Legislature, and glorious to the Nation at large, must, in spite of every obstacle, be the inevitable result.

When

When the provinces of Leinster and Connaught, have followed up the proceedings of Munster and Ulster, the world will see that nothing is difficult to the unconquerable hand of Freedom when backed by public spirit and the fixed resolution of a generous People determined to be free.

Number of Corps, actually Represented :

Antrim	-	-	-	59	Monaghan	-	-	23
Derry	-	-	-	50	Armagh	-	-	23
Down	-	-	-	42	Fermanagh	-	-	8
Tyrone	-	-	-	35	Cavan	-	-	4
Donegall	-	-	-	24				

268

Corps omitted 10

278

Paper X.

Paper X.

HEADS of a PLAN of PARLIAMENTARY REFORM,
proposed by the Ulster Committee of Correspondence to the Provincial Assembly of Volunteers, and by them referred to the Grand National Convention.

A NNUAL Parliaments—Election by Ballot —Mean, decayed or depopulated Boroughs to be deprived; diminution of Members thereby occasioned to be supplied by giving Representatives to such considerable Towns as are not now represented, and by increasing the number of Representatives of Counties, Cities, and great Towns.

QUALIFICATIONS.

In Counties every Protestant Male (Ideots, Criminals, &c. excepted) having inhabited twelve months and for that time possessed freehold worth forty shillings per annum clear, or any kind of property to the value of twenty pounds over and above legal debt, to be an Elector.

In Cities and Towns the same qualifications as in Counties to entitle a person to vote, also living in a house for which he pays five pounds yearly rent or more. No menial servant however to vote either in County, City, or Town, unless a householder paying taxes.

Every

Every person offering to vote, (if required by any Candidate or Elector,) to be obliged to swear to his qualification, and that he will vote for such Candidate or Candidates as he believes most likely to support the liberties of the People in Parliament, and also to take the oath against bribery; all votes once given to stand unimpeachable, but any Elector swearing falsely and thereof convicted by verdict of a Jury, to forfeit twenty pounds to the Prosecutor, lose his franchise for ever, and suffer the punishment allotted for perjury.—If any officer make a false return, and thereof be convicted by verdict of a Jury, disabilities, heavy penalties, and a new Election to take place.

Every Member returned, before taking his seat, besides the present oaths, to swear that he nor no person for him at his cost or to his knowledge, has directly or indirectly bribed any Elector to vote for him.

A reasonable compensation to be made to the patrons of disfranchised Boroughs, also to those of such as from having the Elective Suffrage vested in a few, shall become free Cities or Boroughs, at National expence.

Extention of Suffrage to such description of Roman Catholics as the National Convention may deem proper objects for that great trust.—Elections to be held on same day in the different Baronies, half Baronies or Parishes, so as to finish in one, or in a very few days.

Total

Total exclusion of Pensioners and Placemen, save that the Lord-Lieutenant may appoint any of the Public Officers of the Crown, not exceeding six at any one time, to sit, debate and explain the public business, but not to vote.

Paper XI.

PROCEEDINGS *of the* NATIONAL CONVENTION
of IRELAND.

AT a Meeting of Delegates from all the Volunteers of Ireland, at Dublin, on Monday the 10th day of November, 1783, pursuant to the concurrent desire of the four Provinces of the Kingdom, and from thence continued, by adjournments, till Tuesday the 2d day of December following, in order to take into consideration the subject of a more equal Representation of the People in Parliament; the following Resolutions were agreed to,—

The Right Honourable GENERAL EARL of CHARLEMONT, in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That on every question, when two Members shall desire it, the Secretary shall call the roll, and mark how every Member votes.

Resolved,

Resolved unanimously, That lists be published on the same day on which a division shall take place, where such vote relates to a National question; and to the names of such Members of the House of Commons as are absent on Election Committees, that observation be annexed.

Resolved unanimously, That the Volunteers of Ireland, impressed with the most lively sense of gratitude to their Sovereign, for his Royal attention to the constitutional and commercial rights of his faithful Subjects of this Kingdom, will zealously lay hold of every opportunity to manifest their unshaken attachment to his Royal Person, Family, and Government.

It being the declared sense of our Constituents, that a Reform of Parliamentary Representation is indispensably necessary;

Resolved therefore unanimously, That this Convention do now form itself into a Committee, for the purpose of digesting a Plan of Reform, and submitting it to the Convention.

Resolved unanimously, That it be an instruction to said Committee to direct the Delegates of each County, County of City, and County of Town, to elect one of their Members to form a Sub-Committee, twenty-one to be a quorum, to prepare and digest a proper Plan of Parliamentary Reform.

The General Committee having appointed the Right Honourable Lieutenant Colonel William

Brownlow their Chairman, then sat, and nominated the following Delegates to be of the Sub-Committee:

For Antrim, Lieutenant-Colonel Sharrman.

Cartlishaguy, Rev. William Brooks.

Armagh, Right Honourable Sir Capel Molyneux, Bart.

Cavan, Captain Saunderson.

Dongal, Colonel Alexander Montgomery.

Down, Colonel the Right Honourable Robert Stewart.

Derry, The Earl of Bristol.

Fermanagh, Colonel Irwine.

Monaghan, Colonel Lucas.

Fyrans, Captain Eccles.

Carlow, Colonel Baginall.

Dublin, Major Verschoyle.

Ditto City, Colonel Sir Edward Newenham.

Kildare, Captain Neville.

Kilbenny, Major Wemy.

Ditto City, Lieutenant-Colonel Mofson.

King's County, Colonel Dwyer.

Longford, R. L. Edgworth, Esquire.

Louth, Lieutenant-Colonel Lee.

Meath, Captain Ruxton.

Queen's County, Captain Stephens.

Westmeath, Captain John Lyons.

Wexford, Lord Viscount Valentia.

Wicklow, Colonel Saunders.

Wexford, Colonel Mordaunt.

Clare, Major Stackpole.

Cork, Colonel Roche.

Ditto City, Richard Fitton, Esquire.

Kerry, Colonel Herbert.

Limerick, Colonel Bourke.

Ditto City, Colonel Frendgall.

Tipperary, Major Moore.

Waterford, S. J. Newport, Esquire.

Ditto City, Captain Carew.

Galway, Colonel D'Arcy.

Ditto Town, Major Brown.

Leitrim, Colonel Cullen.

May,

For Mayo, Colonel Sir H. L. Bloffe, Baronet.

For Connam, Colonel Lyfter.

Sigs, Colonel Right Honourable Joseph Cooper.

Who chose Colonel the Right Honourable ROBERT STEWART their Chairman.

Resolved, That the Plan of Reform produced at the Dungannon Meeting, be referred to the consideration of said Committee.

The Right Hon. Robert Stewart, Chairman of the Sub-Committee, reported to the General Committee several resolutions entered into by said Sub-Committee; which said resolutions having been taken into consideration by the General Committee, and having undergone some amendments, were reported to Convention by the Right Hon. William Brownlow, Chairman of the said General Committee; which said report having been read, and afterwards considered resolution by resolution, and having undergone several amendments, passed the Convention in the following form, viz.

Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this Convention, that no Elector in any County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, within the Kingdom of Ireland, be permitted to vote for any Representative in Parliament for said County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, so long as he shall cease to be resident in said County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, unless his right of voting arises from property, whether freehold or leasehold, as hereinafter

specified, of twenty pounds per annum, within the said County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor.

Resolved unanimously, That no Elector shall be deemed a resident within any County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, unless he shall actually reside in said County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, at the time of his registry, and unless he shall have actually resided in said County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, for six months, at the least, in the twelve months, previous to the day of the test of the writ, and unless the said County, City, Town, Borough, or Manor, shall have been the usual place of his residence during the period of his registry.

Resolved unanimously, That every Elector do register his qualification, twelve months previous to the day of the test of the writ, to entitle him to exercise his right of voting for Members to serve in Parliament.

Resolved, That the Sheriff of every County do appoint a Deputy to take the poll in each Barony, on the same day.

Resolved unanimously, That all decayed, mean, and depopulated Cities, Towns, Boroughs, or Manors, which have hitherto returned Members to serve in Parliament, be enabled to return Representatives, agreeably to the principles of the Constitution, by an extension of franchise to the neighbouring Barony or Baronies, Parish or Parishes.

Resolved

Resolved unanimously, That every City, Town, Borough, or Manor, which hath hitherto returned Members to serve in Parliament, be deemed to be decayed, which did not contain, on the tenth day of November instant, within its precincts, a number of Electors, over and above Potwollopers, qualified to vote according to this Plan, of not less than two hundred for the Province of Ulster, one hundred for the Provinces of Munster and Connaught, and seventy for the Province of Leinster; and that whensoever any City, Town, Borough, or Manor, shall so far fall into decay as not to furnish the aforesaid number respectively, that then the said City, Town, Borough, or Manor, do cease to return Representatives, till such time as the aforesaid number of Electors be supplied.

Resolved unanimously, That every Protestant in any City, Town, Borough, or Manor, which have hitherto returned Members to serve in Parliament, seized of a freehold of forty shillings per annum, or upwards, within the precincts thereof, shall have a right to vote for Members to serve in Parliament for such City, Town, Borough, or Manor.

Resolved unanimously, That all bye-laws made, or to be made, by any Corporation, to contract the rights of franchise, be declared illegal by act of Parliament.

Resolved, That every Protestant, possessed of a leasehold interest in any County, of the clear

yearly value of ten pounds, which, at its original creation, was for sixty-one years or upwards, and of which twenty years are unexpired, as per registry, be entitled to vote in said County.

Resolved unanimously, That every Protestant possessed of a leasehold interest, in any City, Town, Borough, or Manor, which hath hitherto returned Members to serve in Parliament, or within the precincts of the same, of the clear yearly value of ten pounds, which, at its original creation, was for thirty-one years or upwards, and of which fifteen years are unexpired, as per registry, be entitled to vote in said City, Town, Borough, or Manor.

Resolved, That the duration of Parliament ought not to exceed the term of three years.

Resolved, That all suffrages be given *vox voce*, and not by ballot.

Resolved unanimously, That no freeman of any decayed, mean, or depopulated City, Town, Borough, or Manor, which hath hitherto returned Members to serve in Parliament, shall vote on elections for Members to serve in Parliament, unless he shall have obtained his freedom by birth, service, or marriage, or unless he shall have been an actual trader or manufacturer during the period of twelve months previous to the day of the test of the writ, as per registry.

Resolved unanimously, That any person accepting or holding a pension, directly or indirectly, other than for life, or term of twenty-

one

one year at the least, be rendered incapable of sitting in Parliament.

Resolved unanimously, That any Member of the House of Commons holding a pension, directly or indirectly, for life, or the term of twenty-one years or upwards, do vacate his seat, but be capable of re-election.

Resolved unanimously, That any Member of the House of Commons accepting any place of profit under the Crown, do vacate his seat, but be capable of being re-elected.

Resolved unanimously, That an additional oath be administered to each Member of the House of Commons, and by him taken before he takes his seat.

A form of an oath being produced and read.

Resolved unanimously, That the said oath be not published, but submitted to the consideration of the Gentlemen who may be requested to move for leave to bring in a Bill for a more equal Representation of the People in Parliament, to receive such amendments as to them may appear necessary.

Resolved unanimously, That any person convicted of perjury by a jury, relative to the said oath, be rendered incapable of ever sitting in the House of Commons.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of the Volunteers of Ireland, represented by their Delegates in the National Convention, be given to the following Noblemen and Gentlemen who

have, with the disinterested spirit of patriotism, offered to sacrifice their private interests at the altar of freedom.—

The Hon. Colonel Mafley,
Francis Bernard, Esq;
The Earl of Charlemont,

The Earl of Aldborough,
Colonel Flood, and
Col. Sir Vesey Colclough, Bart.

Resolved unanimously, That it is highly necessary for the Delegates of Counties, Counties of Cities, and Counties of Towns, in conjunction with the other Freeholders of their several Counties, to take every measure to forward the Plan of Reform agreed to by this Convention, by convening County Meetings, or whatever other Constitutional mode they may find most expedient; and that they not only instruct their Representatives to support the same in Parliament, but also request the Members of the several Cities, Towns, Boroughs, and Manors, within their County, to aid in carrying the same into perfect effect.

Resolved unanimously, That we earnestly recommend it to the Electors of the several Counties of this Kingdom to appoint proper persons to make a return forthwith of each City, Town, Borough, and Manor, belonging to their County, which is, by our plan, declared to be decayed, to report by what admission of Barony or Baronies Parish or Parishes, to the right of franchise, such decayed City, Town, Borough, or Manor, may best be opened, in conformity to said plan, and

and if in any particular place a deviation from the general plan should, by local circumstances, be rendered necessary, that they do specify those local circumstances, with the utmost precision, together with such mode as may appear to them to be the fittest to be substituted in the place of the general regulation, assigning their reasons for the same; but in no case advising such deviation, unless on the most manifest necessity.

N. B. All such information is requested to be sent to J. P. ASHENHURST, Esq; Dublin.

Resolved unanimously, That the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform is manifest, and that we do exhort the Nation, by every Constitutional effort, to effectuate such Reform.

Resolved, That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty from this Convention, as the Delegates of all the Volunteers of Ireland, and that Colonel FLOOD, and the Right Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel WILLIAM BROWNLOW, or either of them, do present the same.

A copy of an Address to his Majesty being then produced and read,

Resolved, That the said Address be agreed to and adopted as the Address of this Convention.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to his Excellency General James Earl of Charlemont, for his eminent services in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the Right Hon.

Hon. Lieutenant-Colonel William Brownlow, Chairman of the Grand Committee, for his strict propriety in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the Right Hon. Colonel Robert Stewart, Chairman of the Sub-Committee, for his strict propriety in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to the Earl of Bristol, for his constant attachment to the Volunteers of Ireland, and his early and decided conduct in favour of a Parliamentary Reform.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to Colonel Flood.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to James Dawson, and John Talbot Ashenhurst, Esqrs. for their faithful and zealous services as Secretaries.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to Henry Gudgeon, Esq; Adjutant-General of Leinster, for his extraordinary pains and attention, during the sitting of this Convention.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to the Volunteer Corps of the County and City of Dublin, who lined the streets on the 10th day of November, 1783, and who have mounted guard during the sitting of this Convention.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Convention be given to the Governors of
the

the Lying-In Hospital, for their politeness in granting the use of the Rotunda for the sittings of the Convention. And then the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

Signed by order,
J. T. ASHENHURST, } Secretaries.
JAMES DAWSON, }

to the consideration of the County Meeting now in a state of suspension. The County Meeting, however, should be held at the County Hall, York, on the 10th inst. for the purpose of considering the proposed measures for the relief of the County. The County Meeting should be held at the County Hall, York, on the 10th inst. for the purpose of considering the proposed measures for the relief of the County.

NUMBER XX.

Paper I.

*Intended Application to the Sheriff of Yorkshire,
to call a General Meeting of the County.*

YORKSHIRE, November 23d, 1779.

WE, whose names are under-written, do most earnestly request the Sheriff, to call a General Meeting of the County, on as early a day as conveniently may be, to consider what measures may be proper to be taken by this County, in the present critical situation of Public affairs.

Paper II?

Paper II. granting the vote for the friends of the Convention. And then the Convention

Note to Lieutenant-General JOHN HALE, inclosing three Advertisements to be made use of in the event of the absence of the Sheriff of Yorkshire, or that of his refusal to call a Meeting of the County.

MR. WYVILL presents his compliments to General Hale; and takes the liberty to inclose for his perusal two advertisements for the County Meeting now in contemplation; and if General Hale approves them, requests he will honour them with his signature and return them by the Bearer. Duplicates are sent at the same time, and for the same purpose to Mr. Chaloner.

As Mr. Chaloner very obligingly offered to undertake the trouble of applying to the Sheriff to call a Meeting of the County, Mr. Wyvill would beg the favour of General Hale also to join the application. And as soon as the General or Mr. Chaloner can communicate the result of their joint application to the Sheriff, to Mr. Wyvill, at *Burton-Hall* near Bedale, Yorkshire: He will immediately transmit one of the inclosed advertisements, *as the case may require*, to the York, Newcastle, and London Papers; provided he is fortunate enough to obtain the concurrence and signature of Gentlemen of property

perty in Richmondshire, and the East and West Ridings, to the number of twelve, or more.

Mr. Wyvill begs leave to suggest to General Hale, the necessity there is for absolute secrecy till it can be known, whether a proper number of Gentlemen will appear in support of this measure.

LEYEN-GROVE, Nov. 24, 1779.

P. S. The third inclosed advertisement, if approved, will be inserted with that for calling the Meeting.

Paper III.

Advertisement to be signed and published in the event of the Sheriff's refusal to call a Meeting of the County of York.

To the GENTLEMEN, CLERGY, and FREEHOLDERS of the COUNTY of YORK.

THE Sheriff having declined to call a General Meeting of the County, the under-named Gentlemen conceiving it to be the duty and interest of every independent person, in times of National

National distress especially, to exert his best endeavours, that measures for the Public good may be concerted and carried into effect; do earnestly request the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of York, to meet at York Castle, on Wednesday the 22d of December next, at ten in the forenoon, to consider what measures may be expedient in the present critical situation of Public affairs.

November 24, 1779.

Paper IV.

Advertisement to be signed and published in the event of the Sheriff's absence.

TO the GENTLEMEN, CLERGY, and FREEHOLDERS of the COUNTY of YORK.

THE Sheriff of this County being unavoidably absent, attending his important service in Parliament; the under-named Gentlemen, conceiving it to be the duty and interest of every independent Person, in times of National distress especially, to exert his best endeavours, that
measures

measures for the Public good may be concerted, and carried into effect; do earnestly request the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of York, to meet at York Castle, on Wednesday the 22d of December next, at ten in the forenoon, to consider what measures may be expedient in the present critical situation of Public affairs.

November 24, 1779.

Paper V.

Anonymous Advertisement, intended by way of
Explanation to the other.

IT is humbly hoped, that no Friend to this Country will decline to attend the Meeting at York Castle, on Wednesday the 22d of December next; which is proposed, not with any party view, but solely on considerations of general utility. The distress of the Public calls loudly on independent Persons of every denomination, to endeavour in a Constitutional way, to concert measures for their own relief, and for the general welfare of the Community. This is

the

the interest of every man of property; and the example cannot be set by any part of the kingdom with more propriety and probability of success, than by the great and respectable County of York.

Paper VI.

Letter from Lieutenant-General JOHN HALE to the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

GUISEBOROUGH, Nov. 24, 1779.

DEAR SIR,

I Have been favoured with your letter, with the advertisements inclosed, which Mr. Chaloner and I think will be eventually very proper, but we conceive it would be improper for two Gentlemen only (one of whom has no estate either in Yorkshire or elsewhere) to apply to the Sheriff for a County Meeting. We shall both be ready to set our hands to an application jointly with such other Gentlemen as shall chuse to concur in such a measure. We have signed the advertisement to be made use of, should the Sheriff upon application refuse to call the County together.

Mr.

Mr. Chaloner desires me to make his excuse for not writing, as he is just returned from shooting.—With compliments to all at Leven-Grove,

I remain, Dear Sir, with great regard,
Your faithful humble servant,
J. HALE.

Paper VII.

Letter from Sir JAMES NORCLIFFE to the Rev.
CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.*

Dear Sir,

TO save the post I write you this in haste in answer to your's of the 26th November.

* The proposal of a County Meeting had received the approbation of the Honourable General Cary, William Chaloner, Esq; and Lieutenant-General John Hale, during the Editor's stay with his respectable Friends at Leven-Grove. On his return home on the 25th of November, 1779, immediate personal application was made by him to several Gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Burton-Hall; of these Randolph Marriott, Gregory Ellsey, and John Sawrey Morritt, Esquires, gave their concurrence with an alacrity which much encouraged the Proposer at the outset of the business: Of the Gentlemen with whom he opened a correspondence on the subject Sir J. Norcliffe, was the third who engaged to promote the measure; another Gentleman whose answer is unwillingly suppressed, had declared his assent on the 27th of November; and at the same time Mr. Mason, to whom the Editor had not then the honour to be known, and to whom therefore no explanation of the plan proposed had been sent, with a zeal which well accords with his usual vigour and public spirit, had also given his unsolicited support.

VOL. III.

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I very willingly add my name to those of the Gentlemen you mean to engage with.—If a Meeting respectable and weighty can be brought together, I hope it may be productive of some good, and may lead the way to other Counties.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

Most humble servant,

JAMES NORCLIFFE.

Sunday, 29th Nov. 1779.

Paper VIII.

*Letter from the Honourable General GEORGE
CARY to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

LEVEN GROVE, Nov. 30, 1779.

My Dear Sir,

THE death of the High Sheriff I conclude must alter your advertisement, but I hope need not delay your applications for the Meeting at York; for as I find by this morning's paper Lord North intends proposing the Land Tax next Friday, the People's eyes should be opened as soon as possible, and nothing more proper to be

be put in the papers than what you thought of when here, unless you can think of any thing *stronger*; for we must all exert ourselves at this critical time, or God knows the fate of poor Old England.—I am glad to hear the East-Riding Militia are soon to be at York; as I am informed *most* of the Officers think as we do. I am glad of your success, and the many respectable names you say *have* subscribed. I will not intrude any longer upon your time; God bless you both, I *hope* we may live to see happier days, which is the sincere prayer of

Your affectionate Friend,

G. CARY.

Paper IX

Circular Letter *from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir WILLIAM ANDERSON, and other Private Gentlemen of the County of York.*

BURTON HALL, Nov. 29, 1779—Near Bedale.

Dear Sir,

A Proposal for calling a County Meeting before another Sheriff is appointed, by an advertisement to be signed by a proper number

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of

of Gentlemen of weight and character in the County, has been lately made, in the North-Riding; and has received there, and in other parts of Yorkshire as much encouragement as could be expected in so few days. It was at first intended to apply to the Sheriff, before the event of his death was known; and copies of an application, and advertisements in the case of refusal by the Sheriff, or his absence from the County, were prepared, and had been signed by several Gentlemen. But that plan being set aside by death; an advertisement in some degree different is now proposed to be published with the signatures by as many Gentlemen as shall favour us with their concurrence, and authority to insert their names. I therefore take the most expeditious method to communicate to you some account of the Plan.

It is wished by the Gentlemen, as far as I understand them, to petition the House of Commons to appoint a Committee to enquire into the state of the Civil List, that all sinecure places, exorbitant salaries to efficient places, and pensions unmerited by public service may be rescinded and abolished.

In the present decline of trade and land-rents, and the apprehension of an additional land-tax, such a measure, it is believed, would be supported by a large majority of this County; and if properly supported by an Association here, and by other Counties adopting a similar plan, would

would probably prove successful in another Parliament. It certainly could not fail to have a very considerable effect at the next General Election; and if once the fund of corruption was reduced, it would be an easy matter to carry the other regulations which are thought necessary to restore the freedom of Parliament. A free Parliament is now, as it has ever been in times of great distress, the only refuge of this Nation; measures evidently tending to that desirable end, would meet with the general support of independent men; by whose united assistance, we trust, the Constitution might be preserved, and restored to the purity of its original institution.

If this should appear to you a proper and a feasible plan, we hope we shall be honoured with your support, and an authority to insert your name, as a Subscriber to the advertisement.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

I beg pardon for hinting the necessity of absolute secrecy in this stage of the business, except to known friends.

Paper X.

*Answer by Sir WILLIAM ANDERSON to the
Circular Letter, addressed to him and other Pri-
vate Gentlemen of the County of York.*

Dear Sir,

I Received your favour, and wish that there was as much Public spirit for the cause of Liberty in these parts, as there seems to be in yours; but there is no rumour of a General Meeting, though I wonder that there has not been one who has thought on it, as the times have a threatening gloomy appearance from our Enemies abroad, and little good is to be expected from our Ministers at home,—at least the present ones; for they have had unbounded power of money and men, and no one scheme or project has succeeded. As to the Meeting in the Castle, can that be had without the consent of the Sheriff? I see by the papers that he is dead, and imagine suddenly, as we have had no account of his being ill. I suppose a Deputy or Under-Sheriff would not act; caution should be taken, as those in power would be ready enough to take advantage of any wrong step. You will excuse me having my name inserted in the advertisement, as I have no property in the North-Riding,

Riding, and never attended your Meetings; I hope others in these parts have been applied to, and that they may be brought to join in the cause:—I fear there is little hopes of redress. I was eye-witness to a most respectable Petition signed by thousands, as big as a portmanteau, flung over the left shoulder with as much ease as if the person had practiced, and the Lord in Waiting caught it with as much alertness as the Duke of Dorset would a cricket-ball; these and many more were all laid by for private use. I wish that the Militia would join in the Petition, and not forget their landed property. So many people of weight are either attending their separate corps, or their duty in Parliament, that I fear there could not be a numerous Meeting.

I am, with great regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

W. ANDERSON.

Nov. 30, 1779.

Paper XI.

Answer by SIMON SCROOPE, Esq; to the Circular Letter.

DANBY, November 30, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I AM favoured with yours of a very interesting and serious subject, which I must own appears to me to be proper upon the occasion. As I have been already applied to by a Neutral Party upon a different plan, and have refused subscribing my name to it, it would appear a little particular for me to set my hand to another application, and you know I did not chuse to make my appearance at Lord Fauconberg's Meeting at Northallerton. So that upon the whole the weight of my name would be of little consequence, and I should think that if the Gentlemen of my persuasion were left out, it would be full as well for the success of the affair. I shall have an opportunity of talking this affair with you soon,

And am, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

And humble servant,

SIM. SCROOPE.

Paper XII.

Paper XII.

Answer by JOHN SILVESTER SMITH, Esq; to the
Circular Letter.

Dear Sir,

BEFORE I enter upon the consequential contents of your letter, you must permit me to return you thanks for the honour you have done an individual, in addressing me upon that subject. At the same time I am very certain you will find my abilities and opinion on this affair too weak even to throw in my mite towards remedying the evils brought on by the unparalleled folly and wickedness of our Rulers. It was my lot, at a former period, to be engaged in a similar plan: why that ended unsuccessfully would not be prudent to commit to paper; and I am very much afraid a scheme of this kind will meet with the same fate, unless, previous to any step taken at the Meeting, a determination to go firmly through with the business is there resolved on; on the other hand, a resolution of that kind will risque the loss of many Advocates for the cause. I am sorry to add, the present lethargic and regardless disposition, in most ranks of men, to the worst of evils, makes an attempt to administer any thing salutary to our expiring Constitution appear fruitless—at least it strikes me in that light. At the same time I cannot avoid
taking

taking notice, that a thin Meeting at York will be matter of triumph, and add strength to the cause of our Adversaries. There is a want of spirit amongst the Yeomanry of this Kingdom: they have not that pride and independency they had; their whole thought and time is taken up in getting money by any means; and they are not to be roused, even if a Prussian Government threatened them. I entirely agree with you in the deplorable situation we are in, and also in the necessity there is for vigorous and spirited measures to stem the torrent; at the same time I am aware that it is right to lend assistance, though the prospect of success be ever so small: but when it is attended with the hazard of encouraging the adverse party, it makes me quite spiritless.—However, I shall most certainly have the honour of paying my respects to you, and friends to the cause, at York; and both there and in the interim contribute all the assistance in my power.

I am much afraid you will think me dilatory. Your favour followed me here, where I have been thirteen days, with part of my family, and shall not return to Newland till Saturday the 11th; where I shall be very happy of being favoured with another line from you.

Mrs. Smith begs leave to unite her compliments with mine to you and Mrs. Wyvill; and Believe me, Dear Sir,

Most sincerely your obedient servant,

WORKSOP, Dec. 2, 1779.

JOHN S. SMITH.

Paper XIII.

Paper XIII.

*Answer to the Circular Letter, by Sir ROBERT
HILDYARD.*

WINESTEAD, December 2, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I Received the favour of your letter by the last post, and was very sorry that I had not an opportunity of acknowledging it by the return. I am very glad to find you have made so good a beginning for an advertisement to call a General Meeting at York. I doubt not that by the time this reaches you, you will have twenty respectable names or more for that purpose; if so, I beg you will add mine, and if I am well, I will attend the Meeting, if not, I shall desire my Son to sign my name to any Petition that may be thought proper by a majority of the Meeting. By the last post I received a letter from my Son with an account of his conference with you upon this subject, and the Plan you have formed upon it. I had also one from Mr. Croft, who tells me that he has wrote to Sir William Anderson and Sir George Armytage, and that Mr. St. Quintin has wrote to his nephew Sir William St. Quintin; I shall be very glad to see
their

their names added to the advertisement. I am extremely obliged to you for your kind enquiries after my health, &c. &c.

And I am, Dear Sir,

Your most faithful,

And obedient servant,

ROBERT HILDYARD.

Paper XIV.

Letter *from* Lieutenant-General JOHN HALE *to*
the Rev. C. WYVILL.

GISBOROUGH, December 3d, 1779.

My Dear Sir,

I Have been favoured with your letter together with the copy of the circular letter you have sent to Sir George Savile, &c. &c. which I entirely approve of, as does Mr. Chaloner; and I should suppose the subject of it must have the concurrence and support of every man of common sense and common honesty in the Country. You are at full liberty to put Mr. Chaloner's and my name to the advertisement for calling the County together, (though you have by mistake

take I suppose omitted to inclose the advertisement in your letter). I will see Messrs. Jackson and Wilson to-morrow, and don't doubt but I shall transmit you their consent by Sunday's post; and I mean to wait upon Mr. Hall, in order to obtain his consent to have his name put down with the other Gentlemen.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great regard,

Your faithful humble servant,

J. HALE.

Paper XV.

Answer by T. WILSON, Esq; to the Circular Letter.

LEEDS, the 4th December, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for the honour you do me in communicating your scheme for a County Meeting, and should very readily acquiesce in any thing for the good of the County, but can by no means think of being the first to take the lead in these parts, and wish some proper person of weight and influence might be pitched upon. I have consulted with Gentlemen of this neighbourhood, some of whom are desirous of having the County called together, but except there be a very large number of the
most

most respectable People, we are of opinion 'twere better for no names to appear, (for we have many respectable men of large fortunes that are little known in this large County) but a general advertisement for a Meeting, fixing time and place, and then it would be no partial set of men but any might go that chose; when we are met say they, what are we to do, if the Parliament imposes Taxes upon us we must pay, our remonstrance will signify nothing;—we have an instance of a set of Gentlemen who lately set on foot a Subscription, for raising money to give BOUNTIES to such as would enlist. When we had paid our money, they were the first that deserted the cause; alledging it was not proper to have their names appear. Others in Parliament could say, 'twas before the House and not proper for them. Upon the whole they laughed at us who had paid our money, and People here are afraid of being left in the lurch again. As the Sheriff is dead, Lord Rockingham would be the proper person to call a Meeting, which I believe he will not do, but I fancy would attend if one was appointed. I intended returning this by Mr. Morritt, but I have heard nothing of him since he left us and imagine he's gone back the other road. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Wyvill,

And am, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,
THO. WILSON.

Paper XVI.

Paper XVI.

Letter by Sir WM. ANDERSON to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

I Received your favour with the enclosed advertisement, and as the intended plan is not to petition the throne for redress but the House of Commons, have reason to think its a proper step, and sincerely wish it may meet with the approbation of the whole County. I have agreed with my friend Croft that my name may be inserted in the advertisement, and hope to have the honour of meeting you and many more of our friends at the time fixed on. The holidays are the properest season, as the Members of Parliament and many people of consequence will be at liberty to attend the meeting. If corruption, that fountain of all evils, that downfall of all Empires can be stopt, we may become once more a flourishing happy Nation.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

WILLIAM ANDERSON.

December 5th, 1779.

Paper XVII.

Paper XVII.

Answer by NATHANIEL CHOLMLEY, Esq; to the
Circular Letter.

HOWSHAM, December 5th, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I Am favoured with your letter of the 1st inst. by this day's post, for which I must beg you to accept my best thanks. It enclosed to me a copy of an intended application to the High Sheriff of the County of York (now altered) to call a Public Meeting of the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County, to be held at the Assembly-Rooms at York the 27th of this month, to consider what measures may be expedient in the present critical state of public affairs; which you mention, took its rise from a motion lately made in the North-Riding, and to which the names of many respectable Gentlemen are set down, as approving of the plan, as well as the names of others who are written to, but whose answers are not received: Now, Sir, as you are so obliging as to tell me what is proposed to be done, if there is such a Meeting, I will freely tell you my sentiments upon it and reasons for them, but at the same time, as I do not know they are those of any other

other Gentleman, I am far from having even a wish, that they may be either adopted or followed by any other person who may differ from me in what concerns the public good; my general desire is, and has been at all times, to look with respect to, and endeavour to attend all Public Meetings, called by the County at large on any great emergencies, being ever willing and desirous as an individual, to contribute any little service in my power, both to the support and assistance of it, and the Government, when they are in need of any; and indeed if any particular part of the County has been called together wherein I looked upon myself concerned, I have generally endeavoured to shew my acquiescence in what a majority of the judgments of the Gentlemen then present, adopted and determined on for the best, who had an opportunity of hearing all that could be said on all sides. But in the present case knowing from your letter what is intended, if there is such a Meeting, I must say I cannot give my name to desire the calling for those purposes—I sat too many years in Parliament, not to be convinced it can be productive of no Public advantage; not but I may be of the same mind as you and many other Gentlemen, that there may be a number of Sinecure Places with great Salaries, that would be better abolished, and their Salaries applied to the benefit of the State, if it could be done, with honour to it (otherwise let alone) and I may also

VOL. III. I agree

agree with you, that there may be many Pensions given out of the Civil List, to Persons unmeriting or at least so in all appearance. Yet before we Petition Parliament, as is proposed, to appoint a Committee to inspect into the state of the Civil List, let us a little consider what it is that constitutes that fund called the Civil List, and how far we have a right to interfere in it.— In the first place I take it to have its existence at present, only from a certain specific Sum of Money given by Parliament to his Majesty, for the support and dignity of the Crown, his Royal Family and the Government, and intirely at his own disposal and pleasure (unless there may be some Fee Farm Rents or other small Hereditable Antient Revenues of the Crown added to it, that have not been granted away.) If any application is made to Parliament for an increase of that Sum, alledging that it is not sufficient for the purposes for which it was given, then Parliament think they have a right to know how the expenditure of it has been made, so as to occasion that deficiency, before they grant any increase to it; and this I speak of with more precision than I otherwise should have presumed to have done, as I have known it happen in my own experience; and I may also say I have heard those accounts called for, and promised when the money was voted; but I do not remember to have heard that any good accrued to the Public from so doing. All Persons that
have

have employments under Government, pay full Taxes for them, I believe now for their Salaries. But as for many of the Great ones, their Profits do not so much arise from their Salaries as from certain Fees, which have been long accustomed to be allowed, and are much more increased in value from the great expences the Nation is now at beyond what it was in former times, this is as matters appear to me to stand at present.

As the expences of Government at present are so great and may be necessary to our existence as a Nation; money must be had to pay them, but by what Taxes they will propose to raise it, as I am not in the secret, I cannot inform you, but whatever they are I hope they will be just ones, which I should not look upon what is called an equal Land-Tax, to be so, as the great difference that appears to be from the unequality of it at present, proceeds from the great expences and trouble the distant parts of the Country from the Metropolis have been at to improve and cultivate their Lands, which those nearer the Metropolis have been enjoying, with the great advantage of plentiful Markets over the others, those lands being sufficiently cultivated before the Land-Tax was first laid in 1696.—As to petitioning for shortening the duration of Parliaments, I have given too many votes already on that Question, and have always found myself in a Minority, so that I must now rest contented and believe if I can, that I was wrong in voting

as I did on that Question, for be private opinions what they may, it must be supposed that a Majority determines the right. But if it should be found that many Regulations are greatly wanted, as I should not doubt but they are, as well as are generally wished for by every friend to his Country, yet I must say I do not think this is the proper time, when the Nation is so engaged and has so many great difficulties of one sort or another to get the better of, to attempt it, as it could not be properly attended to, even if all parties were willing; and the question is of too great consequence for any thing to be done, without a thorough consideration, as it would be equally detrimental for us to inroach upon the Prerogative of the Crown as to give up the Rights of the People, and the most peaceable times, are the properest for doubtful questions to be determined on, and much more so I may say than the present ones are for that business.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

NATHANIEL CHOLMLEY.

Paper XVIII.

Paper XVIII.

**Answer by the Rev. Archdeacon BLACKBURNE
to the Circular Letter.**

RICHMOND, December 5, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for communicating to me the design of a County Meeting, and the steps that have been taken to make it effectual for the important purposes mentioned in your letter. I have in the course of my life attended many County Meetings, none of which (one excepted) produced any thing but disappointment. If that should prove to be the event of the present plan, the consequences may be serious, both to the public and individuals. My age and infirmities will not allow me to stir from home at this season of the year; at the same time I earnestly wish to have an hour's conversation with you, particularly on some things, which, if the Meeting goes forward, seem to me highly to concern the honour and dignity of the County of York.

If I cannot be so happy as to see you, I will take the liberty to put down a few hints, upon paper for your perusal. As I cannot possibly attend the first Meeting, there would I think be an impropriety in promising so to do under my

hand: In the mean-time my warmest wishes are for its success. I have not seen Mr. Hartley, to confer with him on the contents of your dispatches as he has proposed; but nothing will be able to alter my sentiments on the subject. My Family join in our respectful compliments to Mrs. Wyvill,

With Dear Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE,

Paper XIX,

Propositions of Reform suggested by the Rev. Archdeacon BLACKBURNE to the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL, in a Letter dated December 7th, 1779.

AT a most respectable Meeting of the Gentlemen of the County of York, assembled for the purpose of Petitioning the Throne, that the Parliament which had determined Mr. Lutterell, to be duly elected Member of Parliament for the County of Middlesex, might be dissolved; a question was asked, what was to be done in case the Petition was rejected?

It

It was answered, that " a Committee was appointed to receive the report of those Gentlemen who presented the Petition, and if it should appear upon that report, that no regard was paid to the said Petition, another Meeting should be had to consider of a Remonstrance." &c,

It is believed there was a Meeting of such a Committee, and that a report was made to it of the reception of the Petition ; which however was never communicated to the Public, nor one word more heard of a Remonstrance, though it was well known that the Petition was received with evident marks of contempt,

Many Subscribers to that Petition, highly resented this treatment, saying, " they were left in the lurch, and that the County was called together only to answer the views of certain individuals."

To obviate objections to the proposed Meeting on the 27th of December, taken from the event in 1769, some explicit and satisfactory declaration should be made public, that some farther effectual steps will be taken in case the application intended should be slighted or evaded, and with all some spirited notice should be taken of the indignity put upon this great County; by the contemptuous treatment of their Petition.

It should be considered, that the majorities in Parliament are on every Ministerial question formidable and decisive. The dependencies on

Ministerial patronage among the People are numerous ; ten times more so perhaps among these who are out of Parliament, than those who are in it, and I doubt not but many of these will say, they cannot afford to sacrifice their interest perhaps their livelihood to a faint attempt to redress Public grievances ; which, if it should miscarry would expose all who join in it, to the vindictive resentment of a powerful and provoked Administration. Means should be used if possible to abate these apprehensions.

The Reformations proposed are most highly proper and important ; should not the following be added to them.

1st. The healing that effectual stab to the Constitution, the placing Lutterell as Member for Middlesex, by immediately expunging the vote which confirmed his Election, by altering the Sheriff's return.

2d. The absolute repeal of that part of the Statute concerning Elections, which refers the contested Elections in Cities, Boroughs, and Towns Corporate to the last determination of the House of Commons, by which means the ancient Franchises of several Cities, Boroughs, &c. have been superseded, and the Elections in them fallen into the hands of a single Person.

3d. That no Persons in Boroughs should be permitted to Vote in Elections for Members of Parliament by assignment, nor unless they have been personally resident in the Borough for one year previous to the Election.

4th. That

4th. That the Quebec Act be totally and finally repealed.

5th. That the Act of 1778, in favour of the Papists be explained and amended, and that complete lists of those who have taken the oaths in compliance with that act, be called for and made public. *

6th. That Bishops be not allowed to Vote in Parliament except under certain restrictions.

7th. That every County shall choose its own Lieutenant, &c. &c. &c. &c.

* N. B. This act is looked upon to be another effectual wound to the Constitution of Great-Britain, and likely to be fatal to it in its consequences. Popery is not merely the denomination of a religious sect, but a political combination and confederacy, to subvert the Rights and Liberties of all who differ from it. F. B.

Paper XX.

Answer to the Circular Letter by PEMBERTON MILNES, Esq.

Dear Sir,

I Thank you much for your obliging Letter, and am very happy to find this County is going to do what I have long wished for in my own mind; as the Meeting originates with the Gentlemen in the Country, I hope it will be well attended. You are much at liberty to put my name to the advertisement for calling the Meeting,

Meeting, and also these on the other side who have requested me to send theirs to you for the same purpose. * Wilson of Leeds dined with me the day after you wrote to him on this subject, who let me see your Letter to him, I did wish him much to give it proper sanction in Leeds. I am greatly afraid he will throw cold water on it. His nephew Mr. Richard Wilton will be with me before the post goes out, I will learn from him if any thing has been proposed by his Uncle to the Gentlemen of Leeds,

I am, with great regard, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient,

And humble servant,

PEMBERTON MILNES.

WAREFIELD, Dec. 8th, 1779.

* James Milnes,
The Rev. Henry Zouch,
Francis Maude,

Benjamin Ferrand,
John Milnes,
John Smyth of Heath,

About this time several discouraging letters had been received by the Editor; and one of his Friends, whose late loss as a public and as a private Man he equally laments, advised him, on the 5th day of December, 1779, to withdraw his proposal. But the early support held forth by Mr. Mason, Sir J. Norcliffe, Sir Robert Hildyard, and the Gentlemen of the North-Riding, forbade him to adopt that desponding advice: His hopes of success were much increased by the accession of Mr. Pemberton Milnes, and several respectable Gentlemen mentioned in this letter; and in a few days more, it became evident that the Meeting was a measure approved by the general sense of the County of York.

Paper XXI.

Paper XXL

Answer to the Circular Letter by T. GRIMSTON, Esq.

Dear Sir,

I Had the honour of receiving your favour of the 4th date, on the seventh, and would by the return of the post have done myself the pleasure of answering it, had not company with private and public business prevented me.—Tho' I entirely accord to the propriety of the heads of our just complaints, and with you and the other Gentlemen, most devoutly wish any petition of ours, as Independent Englishmen, might have its just force to remove the Hirelings in office, and proved Traitors to their Country, I must confess I am totally against a County Meeting being called at this present crisis, but shall attend it if called, as "*Humanum est errare, at dementia in errore manere.*" And am never ashamed to confess my being in the wrong, when convinced by more powerful arguments than I can bring for what I advance to the contrary. Most of my worthy neighbours in this small angle of this late happy and opulent County, to whom I shewed Mr. Morritt's and your Letter, are exactly of my way of thinking that the scheme is premature.—I beg my compliments to you and your lady,

And am Sir,

Your humble servant, &c. &c.

THOMAS GRIMSTON.

KILNWICK, Dec. 10, 1779.

Paper XXII.

Paper XXII.

Answer to the Circular Letter by HENRY DUNCOMBE, Esq.

COPSGROVE, Tuesday, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I AM extremely obliged to you for the favour of your last, and cannot but applaud the sentiments you discover. How far any Meeting is capable of effecting the end you proposed, however laudable (for such I sincerely esteem it) I will not pretend to determine: I was once engaged in a plan of something of the same kind, where my name among many others, much more respectable, was made use of to call the County together. At our Meeting I had the misfortune to differ from my Associates, as things seemed then to me to carry too much the air of a party spirit which I totally disclaimed: It is for this reason I would not wish to have my name again inserted, though I esteem, that such a use of it would do me honour. I do not mean from what I have here said to preclude my attendance at your Meeting, if in other respects it may be in my power. Indeed I wish with you, that there may be spirit enough yet found in the Country to express a proper sentiment

sentment and sense of the insanity of administration, and to lead the first steps to the amendment of our almost ruined Constitution.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great respect,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

HENRY DUNCOMBE.

Paper XXIII.

*Answer to the Circular Letter by WILLIAM
DANBY, Esq.*

PARK-HILL, Dec. 11th 1779.

Dear Sir,

SINCE I received the favour of yours, I have read the debate in the House of Lords upon the motion made by the Duke of Richmond, altogether similar to that which you make the subject of your letter. Though the replies to it by the Lord Chancellor and Ministry did not appear satisfactory to me, I must own the arguments used by his Grace and the Minority did not answer my expectations.

I have

I have formerly been present at one or two County Meetings that were called with the same tendency, and cannot recollect any good resulting from them. They are liable among other objections to that of the opportunity they furnish furious minds with of uttering great indecencies, and of proposing Resolutions drawn up in terms inconsistent with the authority of any Government that does not deserve to be immediately overthrown. They contribute to encrease the National Disunion we so much lament, and are unseasonable, unless justified by necessity, at a crisis like the present.

The years and infirmities with which I feel myself oppressed help probably to strengthen my present disposition to the peace and quiet which they love, and incline me the more to suspend my determination (for I am ready to rank myself in the number of those who are discontented with the present system of measures) till more frequent calls of assemblies of the same nature ascertain a majority of the people in their favour, which majority is in my opinion necessary to justify any very vigorous measures, adopted under the fallacy of reason and violence of human passion.—My personal acquaintance with the Gentlemen who make up the list you send me mortifies me extremely under my inability to concur with them, and give me leave to assure you without a compliment, more particularly on your account, in whose judgment
and

and uprightness of intention I have the highest confidence. I am sorry to receive no hints from yourself or any other of Mrs. Wyvill's and your design of seeing London this winter. I should be glad to discuss the affair more fully with you in person there, and should rejoice to have many opportunities of improving my friendship where I have the greatest wish to do it.

And be assured,

I am with great truth, Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend and servant,

WILLIAM DANBY.

Paper XXIV.

Answer by WILLIAM CONSTABLE, Esq; to the
Circular Letter.

My Dear Sir,

YOUR two favours found me in Town, where I had retired on some threatenings of gout, and on the appearance of bad weather settling in. Permit me, Sir, to assure you of my most grateful acknowledgments for these marks of your obliging attention and politeness. I shall most assuredly esteem it an honour

hour to have my name inserted in any petition or remonstrance of a Gentleman of your enlarged and benevolent way of thinking, or with *those* of Sir George Savile, Mr. Willoughby, Mr. Mason, &c. Happy if I could flatter myself my subscription could be of the least assistance to a cause, which stands in so much need of the most powerful.

A spirit of prodigality is gone forth, pervades all ranks and all ages, draws the most unwilling into its vortex, and must, I fear, by its consequences, be its own remedy.

This Nation soon will be habitable only for Merchants, Nabobs, Officers, and Dependents on the nod of a Despot. A peace, or a truce, or a something with America, (for we cannot extirpate them all) will open indeed an Asylum to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain, to which they must and will resort.

Mrs. Constable begs leave to join with me in respects and kindest wishes of health to yourself Dear Sir, and Mrs. Wyvill, permit us to hope that another opportunity may offer of cultivating a friendship, which we so much and so sincerely covet.

You are so good Dear Sir as to enquire after my health, my gout is become less violent.— But strength and spirits diminish: My powers of application are no longer the same, I can no longer pursue, without inconvenience long trains of ideas, so flattering to our limited understandings.

derstandings. In fine, Dear Sir, I am sensible that I grow old, and I call into my assistance philosophy and (my) religion; more is not in my power.—May you, Dear Sir, long enjoy every blessing, and continue long to do that good, for which thousands to come will have reason to bless your memory.

I am, with the greatest regard,

Dear Sir, your most faithful

and most obedient humble servant,

WILLIAM CONSTABLE.

MANSFIELD-STREET,

December 12, 1779.

Paper XXV.

Answer to the Circular Letter by THOMAS
YORKE, Esq.

Dear Sir,

IT gives me great pleasure to find the spirit of Liberty and a love of our Country still alive in these perilous and humiliating times; and should think an Association to support the interest of such Candidates only at the General Election as shall engage to forward such measures

asures as shall be recommended to them for restoring the independency and shortening the duration of Parliaments, and establishing a more equal Representation of the People, would be highly meritorious. Though I much doubt whether a Convention of the County at the request of some individuals, however respectable they may be in themselves, would answer our expectations, and I acknowledge I cannot help looking upon my own name as too inconsiderable to appear upon the occasion. Neither do I apprehend that the Petition will be attended with any other effect, than what may be hoped from the example.

I shall have occasion to make a journey from home towards the latter end of this month, but will endeavour to contrive my time in such a manner, as to enable me to take York in my way, if I should find the Gentlemen resolved to carry their intention into execution of convening the County at the time you mention.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great regard,

Your most obedient servant,

THOMAS YORKE.

HALTON-PLACE, Dec. 12, 1779.

Paper XXVI.

Paper XXVI.

Letter from the Honourable General GEORGE
CAREY to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

LEVEN-GROVE, Dec. 12th, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I Received yours this morning, and I am glad the advertisement with the list of names, will come out in next Tuesday papers; I hope the list will be thought a respectable one, I wished to have seen the *Duncombes, Wilson of Leeds, the Recorder of York, and my friend Danby*. I most heartily wish your laudable undertaking may be attended with *success*. I am sorry it is absolutely out of my power to be at York either before, at, or after the Meeting; for though I am better in health than I have been for some years, yet the complaint in my knee continues as usual, and I am impatient to get to Town for better advice. I hope you will find no ill effect by your fatigue at York.

Believe me ever your affectionate
G. CAREY.

Paper XXVII.

Letter from W. CHALONER, Esq; to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

GUISBROUGH, Dec. 12th, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I AM favoured with your letter by this day's post. I rejoice to find the list is so much increased, and hope there will be still a great addition to it before it is inserted in the York papers. I did not make any application to Sir William Foulis or Mr. Mauleverer, upon a supposition that the first could not attend the Meeting, and that the latter would certainly oppose the measure. I find Mr. Wilson is gone to Sir William's to-day in hopes of success, but I have not heard the result of his embassy. I shall certainly attend at York at the time mentioned, and believe the other Cleveland Gentlemen who have signed will also attend, as they are all much for the Meeting.

And I am,

Most sincerely yours,
WILLIAM CHALONER.

Paper XXVIII.

Paper XXVIII.

Letter from J. DALTON, Esq; to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

SLUENINGFORD, Dec. 24th, 1779.

Dear Sir,

I AM just returned from York, and have the pleasure to tell you, that the Meeting of the County is expected to be the most respectable ever known upon any occasion. All the Nobility who have property in the County are expected in town, among others, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Rockingham, Lords Egremont, Effingham, and a great many others.—My friend Harry and I propose being there on Wednesday, where I shall have the pleasure of meeting you and assuring you personally how much

I am, Dear Sir,

Your very sincere

Friend and servant,

J. DALTON.

We must steer as clear as we can of the appearance of Party, as I find Ministerial People already begin to accuse us with meeting with that view, they do you and me much injustice on that score.

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Paper XXIX.

Paper XXIX.

Circular Letter *from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir GEORGE SAVILE, and other Members of Parliament connected with the County of York.*

BURTON-HALL, Nov. 29, 1779—near Bedale.

Sir,

A Proposal for calling a County Meeting before another Sheriff is appointed, by an advertisement, when it shall be signed by a proper number of Gentlemen of weight and character in the County, has been lately made in the North-Riding, and has received there and in other parts of Yorkshire, as much encouragement as could be expected in so few days.—It was the first intention to apply to the Sheriff before the event of his death was known; and copies of the proposed application and advertisement in the case of his refusal to call the County, or of his absence attending his Parliamentary duty, were prepared, and had been signed by several Gentlemen; but that plan being set aside by his death, an advertisement in some degree different is now proposed to be published with the signatures of as many Gentlemen as shall honour this attempt with their approbation and support, and before the middle of next week shall have given authority to insert their
names,

names. I therefore beg leave to communicate to you the advertisement proposed, together with an account of the plan which has been agreed to by the Gentlemen, if a Meeting should take place.

It is wished, as far as I understand the Gentlemen, to petition the House of Commons to appoint a Committee to enquire into the state of the Civil List; in order that all *exorbitant salaries* to efficient places may be reduced; and all *sinecure places*, and *pensions unmerited by public service* may be abolished. In the present decline of trade and land-rents, and the general apprehension of a heavy addition to the land-tax in the North, more especially, such a measure it is believed would be approved by a large majority of this County, and if properly supported by an Association here and by other Counties adopting a similar plan, would probably prove successful in another Parliament; it certainly would not fail to have a considerable effect at the next General Election; and if once the fund of corruption were thus reduced, it would be an easy matter to carry the other Regulations, annual Parliaments, more County Members, &c. which are thought necessary to restore the freedom of Parliament. A free Parliament is now, as it ever has been in times of great National distress, the best, if not the only hope and refuge of this Country. Measures evidently tending to that desirable end would meet

with the general support of independent men; by whose united assistance the Constitution might be preserved, and the House of Commons restored to the purity of its original establishment.

If this should appear to you, Sir, a proper and a feasible plan, the honour of your support, and an authority to insert your name as a subscriber to the inclosed advertisement, would be received with the highest satisfaction by the Gentlemen who promote the undertaking.

The inclosed paper contains lists of those Gentlemen who have declared in favour of this measure, and of those who having been applied to very lately have not been able to return their answer.

I am, Sir, with the greatest respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XXX.

Paper XXX.

Answer by Sir GEORGE SAVILE to the Circular Letter, dated Nov. 29, 1779, and addressed to him and other Members of Parliament.

LIVERPOOL, Dec. 11th, 1779:

Sir,

YOU will naturally be surpris'd at the long interval between the date of the letter I have had the honour of from you, and that of this answer to it. It will be explained when I acquaint you that your letter and packet (which was sent up to London) did not come to my hands at this place till the other day, although I have since unavoidably let a post or two slip without acknowledging the receipt of it. I did not lose a moment in forwarding the inclosed letters according to their directions, which I found had lost so much time by my absence from London. Indeed I should have blamed myself very much, as well as been concerned for that absence, if it had been owing to any private avocation or to the pursuit of any pleasures, or were any business of my own. You will see, however, that owing to this delay, the four letters in question would not reach the Gentlemen to whom they were directed, till considerably after the 6th; the day mentioned for the period

period at which you was to form a judgment of the propriety of the measure or probability of its success. I judge they would (if in London) receive their letters about this day.

The present situation of public affairs is so alarming and in some respects so different in kind as well as in degree from what we have had experience of, that I confess to you, I do not find it easy to come to a conclusion in my own mind what is best to be done, or perhaps I should add (which is full as rational) *by whom*. In a course of but a small number of years, we have seen a succession of events take place, the prophesy of which would have met with no credit. Compare our situation but a few years ago with our situation now, and the change will appear such, that I believe one might affirm the odds would be against any set of men proceeding in doing *so much work* in so little a time if it was to do again. I feel I assure you a very high satisfaction in being able to say that I do not recollect one single instance in which I have not to the best of my power resisted every measure that has led us into this situation. And year after year (as things grew evidently worse and worse) I thought it was impossible but that *those from whom we receive our commission; those for whom we are appointed to act; those whose interests we are delegated to look after; and for whose well being Government itself is instituted*: I say I thought it impossible but that *they* would at last feel enough to make them enquire whether every thing

thing was right or not. One thing however I thought I saw pretty clearly; that till the public mind was awakened, no change would take place. Disaster after disaster, defeat after defeat, loss after loss, disgrace after disgrace made no more difference in the number on a division than the arguments had done before; or, the prophecies which had been made of those disasters, losses, and defeats. Nay we are told with great gravity that *the worse our success the more likely our luck was to turn.*

At the same time I entertained an opinion (whether right or wrong I know not) that this must be left to the feelings of the Country itself, and that no good would be done, but rather hurt by any of the minority in Parliament affecting to take a lead in it. I therefore sat down (not satisfied or contented) but persuaded that there was no remedy but waiting till things were *intolerable*, and therefore, would be borne no longer. I remain pretty much in that opinion, and that it should be your own act and deed. Whenever a Meeting is held (which I presume will hardly now be thought of so soon as mentioned in your letter) I shall hold it my duty to attend. My business will not be to lay before my Constituents the melancholy state of public affairs; God knows there will be little need of that; but to confess with much sorrow that I cannot give them the smallest expectation of any amendment from the quarter to which old custom would naturally lead them to look.

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The terms of the advertisement seem to me very proper. The objects of the Meeting as generally explained in your letter may admit of more consideration. I should entertain doubts whether the three inquiries there suggested, however proper (and highly so they are) in themselves, would produce their effect soon enough to meet the present emergency. I fear, the *exorbitant salaries*, the *sinécures*, the *pensions*, (to which if you please I will add the *contracts* and other things of like effect,) have already done their work and produced that situation which we now *begin to feel*: It is possible too, that some of them may be enjoyed by those who are to be petitioned to reduce or abolish them.

The mere setting or not setting my name to the advertisement I look upon as of no very great consequence. I incline to think, for the reason above given, that propriety is on the side of not doing it. I think if the Country feel, the Country must speak. If it does not, I wish it to be silent. I am as free to declare, that if it does feel it ought to speak, and in the manner which is most likely to bring the relief sought for.— In small or ordinary matters the *people*, having delegated their powers to their Representatives, would rather disturb than advance the public business by mixing in their Counsels, but there are cases in which, as they have a *supreme right*, so they may have *good cause* to remind those who forget it, *whence the fountain of power flows*.

When

When that case is, they must judge!

I by no means, when I sat down, thought of troubling you with so long a letter, but indeed it is not easy to bring within a very short compass, all that suggests itself in a matter of this magnitude and importance.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, with great regard,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper XXXII.

Answer by the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir GEORGE SAVILE's Letter, dated Dec. 11th, 1779.

BURTON-HALL, December 18, 1779.

Sir,

I Have received the honour of your very confidential communication of December 11th, and I beg leave to return you my thanks, in the warmest manner, for the ample and unreserved declaration of your sentiments on the subject of a County Meeting, and the transactions proposed at it. I am happy to be able to assure you that
the

the business has now a better aspect, and promises more success, than could have been expected with any reason, at the time I had the honour to mention it to you. The advertisement has appeared in the York paper, with above 100 names annexed; and, I understand, many Gentlemen who at first stood aloof, and for various reasons declined engaging with us, are determined to attend the Meeting, and to support the Petition for a reduction of the Civil List. Among the Yeomanry the same spirit prevails: I think, therefore, it is beyond a doubt the Meeting will be numerous;—I wish the resolutions of it may be also *firm and temperate*—nothing else can give weight to the measures adopted at it, and produce that union of Independent Men, in support of the Constitution, which can alone preserve it in the present crisis. The unhappy measures to which you, Sir, have given so meritorious a resistance in Parliament, have degraded the Nation from that power and pre-eminence to which a long series of wise and equitable government had raised it. The work of wisdom and equity, for more than one age, has been astonishingly undone in a few years by folly and oppression. ENGLAND must be an impoverished Country; I fear no human wisdom can retrieve our affairs in that respect; no success in war can compensate the expences of it, nor any dexterity in negotiation recover the Country we have lost; but I conceive there

is a probability, that improvements in our Constitution may now be obtained, which it would have been ridiculous to expect in times of greater National ease and prosperity. If those improvements are held out to the Public, unmixed with matter of a more disputable nature, and free from every measure which may be liable to the imputation of Party, I trust there is still sufficient vigour and public spirit left in this Kingdom to form a Country Party able to cope with the Crown, and to save the Constitution. These were the views with which a very private Individual ventured to propose a Meeting of the County, to petition Parliament to abridge the Civil List. Your general approbation of the idea gives him the greatest encouragement to hope, that some public good may be the consequence of this proposition, when more maturely considered and corrected by the advice of Gentlemen of more experience and better judgment in public business. On this account I am most happy to find there is reason to hope the Meeting will be honoured with your attendance, which will certainly give it the greatest weight and dignity, and will be of most essential advantage in conducting the resolutions of the Meeting with propriety, and to some purpose of general utility.

I once more beg leave to express my grateful acknowledgments of the confidence with which
you

you have been pleased to honour me; and to assure you, Sir, that I am, in the fullest and most extensive sense of the words,

Your most faithful and

Obedient humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XXXI.

Letter by Sir GEORGE SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

LIVERPOOL, December 17, 1779.

Sir,

I Troubled you with a longish letter the other day on the subject of the proposed Meeting at York; which letter I hope you have before this time received. I have since heard that the day of meeting is fixed for the 30th, and I propose to have the honour of paying my duty there. I learn by letter from London, that my friend Mr. Hartley has moved (or given notice that he should move) for a bill to secure better the independence of Parliament, by incapacitating certain Placemen to sit: This falls in with
a part

a part of the plan as you explained it to me; I mean so far as it tends to lessen that corruption which is indeed the *original* cause of the evils we complain of.

I wrote my last letter in some haste; and indeed it is nearly the same case now, having pretty constant occupation.

I am, Sir, with great regard,

Your most obedient and

Most humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper XXXIII.

Answer by Sir CECIL WRAY to the Circular Letter addressed to him and other Members of Parliament:

Sir,

I Have received the favour of yours, and I do intirely coincide with you in sentiments on the present critical situation of public affairs, and on your proposed measure to put them into a better train.—Far, though from being sanguine in my expectations, that any immediate good will be the result of your endeavours.

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The

The property I possess in the County of York, though sufficient to entitle me a Freeholder, is not of that magnitude to give me any lead in such an undertaking. If however you should be of opinion, that the name of so small a Freeholder will add any weight to the advertisement, you are fully authorised to insert my name in so respectable a list as you appear to have.

With the sincerest wishes of success,
I remain, your very humble servant,
CECIL WRAY.

Dec. 8, 1779, SUMNER-CASTLE.

Paper XXXIV.

Answer by C. TURNER, Esq; to the Circular Letter addressed to him and other Members of Parliament.

DAVIES-STREET, December the 11th, 1779.

Dear Sir,

YOU will see by the inclosed note from Sir George Savile, the reason of my not answering your letter of the 29th of November sooner.

sooner. It is impossible for me to say, what is proper and possible to do in the terrible dilemma to which the Legislature has reduced this once great and glorious Empire. Short Parliaments and more equal Representation, I agree with you and the late Lord Chatham, are the only means to restore safety to the State; yet, unconstitutional parliamentary power is so pleasant and prevalent, that I believe an attempt to reform it, would be equally opposed by both sides in the two Houses of Parliament, and you may be sure, Agents of the Crown commonly called the King's Friends, would leave no menace or bribe unexercised to damp. Having said thus much, I leave the insertion of my name to your discretion, observing at the same time that collectively speaking I am a culprit. No good I verily believe can be done but by the People, and whether they have yet sufficiently felt to rouse them from their lethargy you must be the best judge, without which a fruitless attempt may throw damp on so good a cause.

I pass my Christmas Holidays with Mr. Shuttleworth, at Aston, near Derby, where I shall be glad to hear further from you, and beg to be considered in the mean-time—

My Dear Sir,

Your most obliged,

And very obedient servant,

C. TURNER.

Paper XXXV.

Answer by Lord JOHN CAVENDISH to the Circular Letter addressed to him and other Members of Parliament.

LONDON, December 13, 1779.

Sir,

I Did not receive the favour of your letter of November 29th, till the last post, or I should sooner have returned you my thanks for it.

There certainly never was a time which more called for the interposition of the Country, than the present: and as far as I am a judge, the point which is meant for the principal object of the intended address seems well chosen. As your letter was so long in coming, I should suppose the advertisement was already published; but if it is not, I should think it better that it was not signed by any Member of Parliament; as well because they are in some measure parties concerned, as that all they who wish to detract from the weight of what is done at such a Meeting, will endeavour to insinuate that it had its origin in London; it is very particular that a motion to the same effect had been made in the House of Lords, since the measure was agreed upon in Yorkshire, but before the account of it had got hither.

I shall

I shall certainly endeavour to be at the Meeting.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

J. CAVENDISH.

Paper XXXVI.

Answer by JOHN LEE, Esq; to the Circular Letter addressed to him and other Members of Parliament.

LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, 14 December, 1779.

Dear Sir,

YOUR letter which is dated the 29th November, did not come to my hands till last Sunday morning, which delay was occasioned by its coming first to London, then to Liverpool, and so back again hither; I think it proper to state this, least I should appear to have been guilty of an omission, touching a letter which I much approve from a Gentleman whom I greatly respect. I have been for a great while exceedingly surprized at the state of men's

minds in the Country, and though it is partly, and indeed in a considerable degree to be accounted for, on the one hand by the prevalence of luxurious manners which waste the means of subsistence, and produce dependance and every species of cringing obsequiousness; and on the other by the influence of the Crown's power, which the unfortunate system of continual borrowing without ever paying, has caused to be so enormous, as justly to alarm every man who can look to the probable consequences of things; yet, powerful as these causes are, neither they nor any other that I can distinctly state, seem sufficiently to account for all the appearances before us. Gentlemen of landed property find their estates sinking, their Tenants quitting, their Mortgages distressing them beyond the example of any time now remembered, Merchants find trade declining, credit languishing, Manufacturers in great numbers idle and unemployed, of course great part of the produce of Estates in such Countries, swallowed up in increasing Poor Rates for the maintenance of those useless hands, that were lately the wealth and strength of our Kingdom. Our Nation lately the most illustrious and powerful in the world, has lost millions of its most vigorous subjects, who instead of constituting a main part of the Public Force of our Country, are converted into its bitter Enemies, and are leagued with the great Monarchs of Europe to destroy
us,

us. Our neighbour Kingdom, Ireland, disclaims our authority, takes up arms to defend herself against it, and scorning the humility of supplication, demands, and successfully too, with haughty imperiousness, ten times more than we refused very lately to the pressing solicitations of her Friends.—But there is no end of this dismal subject.—All things have gone wrong, but in no respect in my mind so wrong as in this, that the Public cares little about it. It seems to me as if our Governors were highly pleased with this general apathy in the body of the People, which I think Montesquieu calls the mournful silence of a City that the Enemy is about to storm. I am glad however that you and several others of my worthy Friends and Countrymen are of another opinion, and are setting yourselves in earnest to counteract the mischief of such a temper. The first object of your Meeting, the inquiry into the state of the Civil List, is in my judgment a point of great importance and necessity, not only as a mode of Economy (which is always laudable but now absolutely indispensable) but as a Reform of our Constitution, by restoring to men that liberty of thinking and acting which it is in vain to look for in those that are fed by the crumbs that fall from another's table. I perceive you have in view some other objects, immediately respecting the Constitution of Parliament. It is a very great and weighty subject to

the discussion of which I am very unequal.— But having had as much knowledge as most men of the theory and practice of modern Elections, I will trouble you with a few words about it: I have often in my imagination indulged a wish that all Members of Parliament were returned by the Counties and great Towns; not that I think such a regulation *if it were now to take place* would produce any good effect: On the contrary, so much have I seen of this Ministerial influence and its powerful operation, that I have often said that were the power of the Crown exerted to the utmost to turn any County Member out of Parliament, it is my opinion the object would be attained except perhaps in the instance of Sir George Savile, whose excellent understanding, and public and private virtue form a character that would be a great singularity in any age, and seems to be a prodigy in this. Accordingly, whenever I have attended contests of the sort alluded to, (as I have often done) it has either happened, that the Person espoused by the Court has obtained a very complete victory, or the party contending against the power of the Court has been so disabled by the wounds received in the first engagement, that they could never have the heart to make another attack, of which I can give many ruinous instances.

Indeed it is obvious that it must be so, for the Crown's influence is a constant unceasing energy that never is impaired, whereas the power opposed

posed to it, shews itself in a violent effort that exhausts itself in the first struggle, and cannot soon rise again. If I could previously see all undue influence removed from Elections, I should be more reconciled to the idea of short Parliaments; but I think the Crown would get a great deal of power instead of losing it by any such alteration, I mean as things stand at present. I intended to have written you a great deal more, but I am called off by other engagements, and will only add my hearty wishes that good may come of your Meeting, and particularly that a disinterested zeal to promote the Dignity and Liberty of our Country may prevail in the minds of those who compose it. I send a line to the York Tavern, to signify that I shall not be able to attend you, as I am troubled with a Chronical Heart-Burn, which makes Bath proper for me, and I have no opportunity but this short vacation of trying the waters of that place, otherwise I should certainly see no objection to my meeting you but my own insignificance.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great respect and esteem,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN LEE.

Paper XXXVII.

Paper XXXVII.

Letter from C. TURNER, Esq; to the Rev. C.
WYVILL. *

DAVIES-STREET, December the 18th, 1779.

Dear Sir,

YOU may be sure I shall be at York the 30th or before, the Dukes of Devonshire, Rutland, and I should hope the Lords Rockingham, Effingham, Egremont, and many Members will be there. I like your plan of Parliamentary Redress with temperance, but without a steady support from the People I doubt the success. Every County and every man that has eyes sees the evil; but the Crown influence is so searching that resisting it with effect, without blood is next in my eye to a miracle, for the People, whose conversation you would think the most patriotic are the deepest immersed in corruption, poverty may do what I am sure affluence never can. I have a hope that a certain description of aristocratic men who have thus far considered the emoluments and patronage of the Country, as due wages for having banished the Stuarts and arbitrary Power, see that by these means they have engrossed a more dangerous engine in the hands of the Crown, than

* A Copy of Mr. WYVILL's Letter to Mr. TURNER, to which this is an Answer, has not been found.

was ever possessed by our former Kings. And I now Sir, certainly believe that several of them with whom I am acquainted, are convinced of their errors and are now convinced that their true weight and consequence must be co-existent with the People's Rights. My too ardent wishes may bias my judgment in this most essential point perhaps, but I see no other probable success for the avowed necessary redress, but this mode of conduct; for let the perfectest union possible of all friends and well wishers to the Constitution be ever so soon effected, it will have enough to resist the weighty and exorbitant patronage Government possesses.

I am, really and truly

Your obliged servant,

C. TURNER.

Paper XXXVIII.

Answer by EDWIN LASCELLES, Esq; to the Second Circular Letter dated November 29, 1779.

HAREWOOD-HOUSE, December the 21st, 1779.

Sir,

I Got home only last night from London, where I have been since the Meeting of Parliament, attending my duty.

Your

Your favour without a date I found upon my arrival. This being the first opportunity I had to acknowledge it, I am glad to embrace, and to return you my sincere thanks for the intimation you have been pleased to give me, of the subject that is proposed to be recommended at the Meeting on the 30th instant, at York. I agree with you and am fully convinced that the most rigid and strictest Economy, in every department of Government, never was more necessary than at the present alarming crisis, and therefore be assured that as an Independent Freeholder, subject to no controul whatever, I shall be ready to concur in giving my humble aid and assistance, to such salutary and effectual measures as are likeliest to produce the desired effect.

I have the honour to be,

With respect and esteem, Sir,

Your obedient and most humble servant,

EDWIN LASCELLES.

"In this Number some letters have been permitted at the Editor's request, to be inserted, the appearance of which was important on no other account than merely to show the early activity of those Gentlemen, by whom the letters alluded to were written in support of the measures proposed. If good resulted from their exertions to the Public, which seems not to be doubted, it is fit the Public should be particularly apprized to whom they were chiefly indebted for it.—The answer by Henry Peirse, Esq; to the Circular Letter, which was received before the Meeting has not been found. This is a mortifying circumstance to the Editor; who, without fearing the imputation of partiality from his friendship for that Gentleman, declares his high opinion of the firmness and disinterested zeal with which he supported the cause of Constitutional Liberty, on this, and many subsequent occasions."

NUMBER XXI.

NUMBER XXI.

Paper I.

Letter from Dr. A. HUNTER to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

FROM a perfect conviction of the propriety of the Petition, I am anxious to see every thing removed that can draw down an argument against it. Many persons, of no mean distinction, object to the second Resolution, as conveying a "threatening," attended with something like "hostility," in case the prayer should not be granted. If I remember right, you expressed a different idea of the matter when you honoured me with your company on Monday last; but as it is taken otherwise by some persons, it would in my opinion, be well to have this object removed. I am sensible that the objection will be improved upon by the enemies of the Petition, and I should think

think myself wanting in respect to your patriotic services, if I declined communicating the above, in hopes that the matter will be set right by an explanatory advertisement.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate servant,

A. HUNTER.

YORK, January 2, 1780.

Paper II.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Dr. A.
HUNTER.

BURTON-HALL, January 7, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I Can with great truth answer for myself, that my views are strictly and solely Constitutional. I wish to see some reformation of great public abuses proposed; I wish to see such honest proposals, from whatever quarter they may come supported with decency and temper, and by means perfectly pacific, and conformable to Law and the Constitution. The Petition lately agreed to by the County, aims at correcting an abuse which, I believe, may well be considered

as the root of almost all our grievances. Nothing can be more opposite to sound policy, as well as every idea of morality, than adopting corruption as the principle of Government. By such mistaken policy the wealth of the Nation, which ought to be applied to the National defence, is wasted in donatives to worthless individuals; and when many of these individuals are Members of that House, from which the people expect protection of their Liberties, the integrity of the House itself suffers some diminution in the Public estimation, and disrespect of the Legislature must then unavoidably take place. So far as the Petition may affect the fund of corruption, I trust it will have the approbation of rational men of every description of party in this County. I understand, indeed, it is not the Petition which is objected to, but the apprehended means of supporting it. Once more, therefore, I beg leave to assure you, Sir, that I have not a view which is not pacific, and agreeable to Law and the Constitution. If Gentlemen are hurt by the term, *Association*, I wish some other less-offensive word was substituted in its place. But all that is really meant, as far as I am acquainted with the sentiments of the Committee, is to support the Petition, by engaging not to Vote for any Candidate for a seat in Parliament at any future Election, who will not promise to support the Reform requested by the Petition. After that point is obtained,

obtained, if the County should apply to shorten the duration of Parliament, or get more County Members, the same mode of support will certainly be proposed.

Heads of an Association to that effect were read at the previous Meeting, but withdrawn, to be more maturely considered. Probably that paper may soon be published; and it will, I hope, convince the world that the proposed mode of supporting the Petition is as harmless and peaceable as the object of the Petition is desirable; and, in the present crisis, necessary for the welfare of our Country.

I cannot close this long letter without returning you my best thanks for the opportunity you have given me, to explain myself on this important subject; I hope to your satisfaction, and particularly to the satisfaction of those Gentlemen who expressed to you their disapproval of the intended Association. I have no objections to the communication of this letter wherever you think fit.

I am, Dear Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Paper III.

Letter from Dr. A. HUNTER to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

YORK, January 9, 1780.

Dear Sir,

ACCCEPT my best thanks for your obliging letter, and though I am perfectly satisfied that the Second Resolution was meant, by all the Gentlemen concerned, to convey sentiments very different from "hostility," yet I cannot but lament that a different interpretation continues to be put upon the words by persons residing at a remote distance. To remove effectually such a dangerous impression, it would, in my humble opinion, be right to insert an explanatory paragraph in the York Newspapers, under the authority of the Committee. "An Association upon legal and constitutional grounds," with one set of men, means one thing; with other men, it has a different signification. Hence it becomes abundantly necessary, that the kingdom at large should know *our* interpretation.—I wish you all manner of success in the good work you have begun, and am happy to find, that many remote Counties intend to follow the laudable example of the Freeholders of the County of York.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate servant,

A. HUNTER.

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Paper IV.

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Paper IV.

Letter from Dr. HUNTER to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

YORK, January 19, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I Have read with great satisfaction a paragraph in the *York Chronicle*, explanatory of the words "An Association upon legal and constitutional grounds," being part of the Second Resolution of the General Meeting. They who have attempted an explanation of the sentence by turning over their dictionaries for the meaning of the word "Association," have, in my humble opinion, greatly mistaken the method. The whole of the sentence must go together,—You have done it handsomely, and with judgment; for which service the Public stand much indebted to you. I wish you the full reward of your zeal in a cause that has already done you so much credit,

And am, with great truth,

Your very affectionate servant,

A. HUNTER.

Paper V.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Hon.
CHARLES JAMES FOX.

ALBERMARLE-STREET, Feb. 13, 1780.

Sir,

I Have just received the honour of your letter of this day, communicating the Resolutions of

of the Westminster Committee; by which they are pleased to admit the Chairmen of other Committees honorary Members of theirs; and invite me particularly to attend their next Dinner Meeting. I am very sensible of the honour the Committee have done me, and beg they will accept my most grateful acknowledgements.—But from the multiplicity of business I am engaged in; being already a Member of two County Committees, I fear, I must beg to decline attending the Committee of Westminster. I am much concerned that unavoidable engagements must prevent my having the honour to dine with the Committee to-morrow.

I shall be happy to confer with you, Sir, on the subject of the intended Associations, and will either wait upon you to-morrow morning at half an hour after ten, or else hope to have the honour to see you here at that time.

I am, Sir, &c. C. WYVILL.

Paper VI.

Card sent by C. TURNER, Esq; to the Westminster Committee.

MR. Wyvill begs leave to decline attending the Westminster Committee. He is extremely sensible of the honour done him; but from his knowledge of the sentiments of the Independent Gentlemen of Yorkshire, he conceives it proper and advisable for him to take this line; he ever conceives himself pledged to do it.

Saturday, February 26.

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Paper VII.

Paper VII.

*Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Viscount
MAHON.*

ALBERMARLE-STREET, Feb. 28. 1780.

My Lord,

MY objection is not personally to Mr. Fox, but as I stated it last night to your Lordship, to all great Partizans and Parliamentary Leaders of either House.—The reason is an obvious one; the Public is jealous of such Men, and their interference in the most important business of the Petitioners would give it an air of party, to which I must withhold my consent. It would be a matter of much difficulty I fear, to obtain any reasonable assurance from Persons of that description, that they would decline being appointed or acting as Deputies. But if such satisfactory assurance can be obtained, I think it might be proper in that case, for the Gentlemen at the St. Alban's Tavern to rescind their Resolution of February 24th, especially as some of them have hesitated to circulate it; and to express the whole, in a less disagreeable mode, in two Resolutions similar to those I have the honour to inclose for your Lordship's perusal. †

But

† The Parliamentary Leaders alluded to in this letter, felt the force of the objection here stated; and desisted from their design to sit in the First Meeting of Deputies.—On the other hand, the Popular

But I think it necessary to declare distinctly, that if any Person of the class above-described, should be appointed a Deputy, and act in that capacity, I shall withdraw myself from that Meeting.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. I take it for granted in what I have said above, that the proposed Deputed Committee will be dissolved before the 25th of March.

Popular Agents desisted from their endeavours to obtain an exclusion of all Members of Parliament from that Meeting, being satisfied with a concession which secured that Assembly from the imputation of being a mere Instrument of Party; which would have been fatal to the Cause of Political Reformation. The two Resolutions communicated to Lord Mahon, were adopted by the Meeting at the St. Alban's Tavern, on the 28th of February 1780, and in consequence of their adoption, the First Meeting of Deputies was held soon after, in the manner proposed.

Paper VIII.

Letter from DAVID HARTLEY, Esq; to the Rev.

C. WYVILL.

GOLDEN-SQUARE, March 22, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I Send you the letter addressed to yourself, as the first promoter of all the good that we

M 3

may

may in future expect either for Reformation or Peace. I cannot express to you how earnest I am upon Peace with America; Truce is certainly the most obvious and the mildest way.—If you could recommend that System to adoption through your influence, you will be the greatest Friend to your Country and to Mankind. I enclose the terms of negotiation which I proposed last year as stated in Parliament.

I think the authority of the People of England is required to support any point of such magnitude, and as it were to direct the way to their Representatives.—I should be most happy to be in any degree an instrument to that end. I heartily wish you health and success in all your undertakings.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your's most sincerely,

D. HARTLEY.

P. S. I inclose to you a copy of the Motion which I made yesterday for a Bill to exclude certain Placemen from Parliament. Sir George Savile seconded the motion.

Paper IX.

Letter from DAVID HARTLEY, Esq; to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

LONDON, March 22d, 1780.

Dear Sir,

THE universal concurrence of all parts of this Kingdom, who have followed the laudable example of the County of York, in promoting principles of Public œconomy, and in recommending a system of active vigilance and vigorous exertions in the several departments of the State, is the most honourable and satisfactory testimony of Public gratitude, to those worthy and respectable Characters who have stood foremost in the Public cause. This system has proved doubly fortunate in its operation, not only in the primary effect, of establishing the rights of the Public at large, to require from their Representatives in Parliament, the most rigid frugality in the expenditure of Public money, but most principally by drawing the National attention unanimously to this one object, of concerting some future system of wise and prudent measures which may extricate this Nation with honour and safety, from those numerous embarrassments under which we labour at present. In this object the most per-

fect unanimity prevails now. Lands, Manufactures, and Commerce are all equally interested. Their all is now at stake. The enormous Debts and Taxes which have been accumulated upon us, since the commencement of the present unfortunate War, are almost beyond measure. The annual Interest of the National Debt at the beginning of the War was something more than Four Millions. It is now more than Six Millions; and even if we should take the shortest road to put an end to the War, I am sorry to say that our present outstanding Debts, and the Expences which are now running on, will soon bring it up to an annual Rent-Charge of Eight Millions. It will be still more if we still go on farther. It is therefore time to consider how this Nation may stand under an annual Rent-Charge of Eight Millions Sterling, for the interest of our accumulated National Debt; more especially when the certain effect of the greatness of that Debt, and the almost insupportable weight of that annual charge, must be a grievous depression of the National Rent Roll of this Kingdom. Taxes upon Taxes pursue us to our most interior domestic recesses without sparing the Tenant or Cottager any more than the Landlord. Seven Hundred Thousand Pounds per annum *for ever*, is mortgaged for the current service of this *single* year of the War; and double that annual sum (or nearly) will be still farther necessary to be laid upon

upon the Land Owner, the Merchant, and the Manufacturer, for the present enormous outstanding Debts, and such expences as must be incurred only by one year's longer continuance of the War.

These things require our most serious reflection, and call upon us to consider our actual situation in respect to that War, which has, and still must continue, in an encreasing measure, to involve us in endless Debts, Taxes, and Ruin; we must at all events support our National honour by the most vigorous exertions, without shrinking, but surely in such a complicated War as this is, if we can make any equitable offers of Treaty to any of the Parties, common prudence calls upon us to use our endeavours to unravel by negociation the Combination of Powers now acting against us. That there does exist a most formidable confederacy against this Country is too true. The House of Bourbon have formed that confederacy, and America is involved in it. But I do not think that it can be imputed to America, to have been active in seeking and forming a confederacy against this Country, upon any other motive on their part, than what appeared to them to arise from the necessity of self-defence. Let us therefore be understood not to apply the charge of a confederacy against this Country specifically to America, who has evidently been driven into it with reluctance. Permit me therefore to suggest
a few

a few conciliatory sentiments upon this subject. If it should appear that America has proceeded with regret and reluctance into Foreign connexions, I think the chief ground of irritation would be removed, and an obvious road would be laid open to facilitate the restoration of Peace and National reconciliation between Great-Britain and America.

The Americans about two years ago formed a *defensive eventual* alliance with the Court of France. The *event* upon which that *eventual* alliance was become positive and to take effect, was the continuation of the War by the British Ministry. Now surely there cannot be two things in the world more different from each other, than a *defensive eventual* alliance, for their own security in case of the continuation of the War, and the charge of forming a Confederacy against Great-Britain. A Confederacy is an offensive act, not a defensive one. The league of Cambray in former days against the State of Venice, was a Confederacy. The league against the King of Prussia in the beginning of the late War, was a Confederacy. The late league for the division of Poland, was a Confederacy.— But a *defensive eventual* alliance, formed by America for their final security, just at a moment of time when the British Ministry pretended to conciliatory propositions; and while America was in suspense as to their sincerity, which alliance was only to take effect eventually

tually upon the proof of the insincerity of the British Ministry by the continuation of the War, can never be called a Confederacy against this Country. This indeed is the language which the Ministry have held out in the King's Speech, at the opening of the present Session of Parliament, and they are at this moment endeavouring to inveigle the Nation into the continuation of the American War, under this pretext of a supposed American Confederacy.—*Their motives are obvious, they wish to instigate the continuance of the American War.* But surely on the part of those who wish the restoration of Peace, or any future friendly connexion with America, it would have a more conciliatory effect to avoid words of crimination, which cannot fail to revive the memory of all the grievances and mutual reproaches during the contest. Let all such aggravations be consigned to oblivion.

There is every rational ground of argument to hope, that by generous and temperate management on the part of this Nation, America may be reconciled to this Country, and prevented from forming any perpetual Alliance with France. Their obligations to France are limited, and as such, may be satisfied and discharged.—France cannot have been ignorant that America has been excessively harrassed by the continuation of the War, the seat of which is in their own Country; and yet it is apparent to all the world,

world, that France might long ago have put an end to that part of the War which has been most distressing to America, if they had chosen so to do. Let the whole system of France be considered from the very beginning, down to the late retreat from Savannah, and I think that it is impossible to put any other construction upon it but this, viz. That it is, and always has been, the deliberate intention and object of France, for purposes of their own to encourage the continuation of the War in America; in the hopes of exhausting the strength and resources of this Country, and of depressing the rising Power of America. If such has been the conduct of France, let the reverse of this policy be the guide of our conduct. Let us hold out a conciliatory hand and a cordial offer of Peace to America. Let America feel that the People of England are not their Enemies. Let them feel that they have no Enemies in this Country but an implacable and vindictive Ministry, and let the result be a reconciliation and federal union between Great-Britain and America.—The road to effect this is plain and broad before us, we have but to go strait forward, and we cannot miss the way. It is no more than this—to make in the first Place a plain and sincere offer of Peace to America (beginning perhaps with a Truce and Cessation of Arms, for a sufficient length of time) and then to enter into a course of Negotiation for establishing a federal Alliance. If the People of Great-Britain will now step forth

forth to restore Peace to America, which their new Ally has not effected for them. Let any man then judge, whether America will in future prefer the connexion with France or with Great-Britain, as their truest Friend and Ally.

There is no constituent Member of this Community which can with more dignity or propriety take the lead in recommending the adoption of some plan for the termination of the American War and for reconciliation with America, than the County of York. Such an object would be most worthy of their interference. That would be laying the axe to the root of the evil, Pensions, Places, exorbitant Emoluments, Sinecures, Contracts, and all such instruments of corruption, for the purpose of establishing a Ministerial influence in Parliament, are abominations at all times; but the greatest of all our evils *now* is the continuation of the American War. The restoration of Peace with America, and of independence to Parliament, may go hand in hand together; and I believe that both these points are equally consonant and cordial to the sentiments and wishes of every real Friend to this Country.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the greatest esteem and respect,

Your most obliged friend,

And most obedient servant,

D. HARTLEY.

Paper X.

Paper X.

Letter from DAVID HARTLEY, Esq; to the Rev.
C. WYVILL.

SODEBURY, April 24, 1780.

Dear Sir,

NOT being in town when the favour of your's arrived, containing an account of the Resolutions of the General Meeting at York, I could not acknowledge the favour by return of Post. I therefore now take the earliest opportunity of expressing to you, not only the very great satisfaction which I have received from all the Resolutions and Proceedings of that Meeting, and more particularly that conciliatory Resolution (unanimously passed) respecting the American War; but likewise of returning to you my best thanks for the very favourable reception of my letter addressed to yourself; which has more particularly a view to lay the ground of conciliation with America by a suspension of hostilities. As to the printing of that letter, the proposition is most flattering to me, more especially as it will give me an opportunity of attaching my name to your respectable character and name. But indeed the cause of conciliation with America is a point which fits so near to my heart and thoughts as to supercede all matters of compliment. It has
always

always been the object of my most earnest endeavours both in Parliament and out of Parliament. If I may flatter myself that the sentiments of that letter, may in any degree contribute to the blessed work of Peace with America, I shall think all my labours overpaid. The cordial satisfaction which you must receive in the success of those Public measures, in which you have had so principal a part, is no more than a just and merited reward for your upright conduct and zealous exertions. You have received the thanks of your Country; nothing therefore remains for your Friends to wish for you, but that health and happiness may attend you.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your most obliged friend,

And most obedient servant,

D. HARTLEY.

Paper XI.

Letter from Sir W. MEREDITH to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

WHITEHALL, April 9th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for honouring me with your attention so much as to think my proposition

proposition worth your comment, I shall not move the address, for Mr. Dunning totally rejects it, as not being SPECIFIC.

I conceive it to be of some use to bring the minds of the People both to the true sources of corrupt influence and our present National poverty, which spring not from the KING's but from *Lord North's* Civil List. (As the extraordinaries were termed by Lord Shelburn.)

I printed ten copies of my address, of which I burnt all but four. Perhaps you will do me the honour to keep one, in proof of my well-meant but unavailing study. I don't submit to Mr. Dunning's authority in treating a vote and address of this sort as not Specific: for it is the usual and Constitutional mode of proceeding; always held as binding upon the Minister as any Law *can be*. For, the *controul*, as well as *gift*, of Public money is in the Commons only, therefore the Resolution and Address take in those branches of the Legislative and Executive Powers that possess, one the granting and directing, the other the disposal of supplies.

I congratulate you on the noble Majority which we and our posterity owe to you.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the greatest respect,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

W. MEREDITH.

Paper XII.

*Paper XII.**Letter by Sir R. SMYTH to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

Sir,

I Send you inclosed a copy of the Resolutions of our General County Meeting, by which you see we follow your steps nearly ; we lament very sensibly the secession of some Counties, and suspect that the Rockingham Party have thrown this damp upon the ardor of the People, we are resolved if one set of men will not assist us to relinquish them totally, and adhere to those who will ; I should be glad to know what is likely to be your next proceeding, and whether we should not procure another Meeting : if we should stop here, we shall have made but a ridiculous figure ; I should be glad to know your idea about the mode of detecting bribery in Elections ; and what will be your next general proceeding.

I am, Sir, truly,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ROBERT SMYTH.

GRAFTON-STREET, 4th May, 1789.

Paper XIII.

Answer by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the preceding Letter.

BURTON-HALL, May 14, 1780.

Sir,

I Have received the favour of your letter with a printed Account of the proceedings of the late County Meeting at Chelmsford inclosed; and I take the earliest opportunity to return you my thanks for the obliging communication, and to congratulate you on the unanimity which happily subsists between Essex, Yorkshire, and the other Associated Counties. It is from the continuance of that union that our only hope of success can be derived, if the People divide among themselves, they will lose their weight and importance and then it will be unreasonable to expect the great body of Nobility will declare in their favour, without whose concurrence it is plain enough the whole popular Party never can prevail against the over-ruling power of the Crown. The first essential requisite to success has been attained, which is a general union of the People in measures fully equal to correct that great and alarming evil; but the next indispensable requisite can only be attained by a proper mixture of firmness and prudence, showing a steadfast resolution to support the Plan of Reformation,

Reformation, and yet cautiously avoiding whatever may disgust and alienate that respectable body which holds the balance between the Crown and the People. For reasons which it is unnecessary to enumerate, it is surely not surprising that the Nobility pause and hesitate to adopt the popular Plan ; but there are among them many men of Virtue and of just Political Principles, who are alarmed for the safety of the Constitution, who dread the increasing power of the Crown, and who may be expected to take a decisive part in support of that Plan which the People propose for its reduction, if their hesitation is treated with that candour and patient good nature, to which the doubts and difficulties of real Friends are always intitled.— This opinion appears probable from some late occurrences in Yorkshire, particularly from the accession of Lord Effingham to the Association, which I consider as an acquisition of the greatest importance and likely to accelerate the junction of other noble and very powerful Friends.

The Yorkshire Committee has not yet named Deputies to meet the Deputies of other Committees, &c. in London, but such a measure will undoubtedly be proposed in the course of this summer, and I believe will be readily adopted by the Committee.

The present Session draws near a conclusion, and as several Petitioning Bodies have deferred entering into an Association till that event had

ascertained how far this Parliament would redress the grievances complained of, it seems advisable not to meet in deputation again till our numbers are complete. In summer that General Meeting could act to little purpose, though with great inconvenience to the Deputies of the more distant Counties, I therefore imagine the Yorkshire Deputies will hardly be appointed till a few weeks before the beginning of the next Session.

Mr. Tooker, a Counsellor, and one of the Members of our Committee, is preparing a Plan for preventing expences at Elections, &c. but I have not heard what regulations he means to recommend.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XIV.

Letter by Sir R. SMYTH to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I AM desired by some Gentlemen of our Committee to write to you, to know what will be the outline of the Plan of the Committee of York, as we wish to square ours nearly by it; whether a new Petition is necessary to a new Parliament;

Parliament; whether Deputies to be appointed, how many, when to meet, and with what powers, and whether the same points are to be our object, or any change; I understand you meet on the 3d of January next, we are impatient to get together, but wish first to know what you mean to do.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,
ROBERT SMYTH.

11th Nov. 1780, GRAFTON-STREET.

Paper XV.

Answer by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the preceding Letter.

BURTON-HALL—near Beale, Nov. 27th, 1780.

Sir,

YOUR favour of the 10th of November directed to me at York, did not reach this place till to-day; I therefore take the earliest opportunity to return my acknowledgements, and to assure you how sensible I am of the honour your very respectable Committee has done the County of York. I shall certainly lay your letter before the Yorkshire Committee on

the 3d of January; and I doubt not the disposition testified by the Gentlemen of Essex to cooperate with the County of York, will be considered as a most honourable mark of their continued approbation; and will animate the Committee to a more zealous perseverance in the Public cause.

With respect to the Plan which may be adopted on the 3d of January; I think it highly probable, Deputies will be appointed to meet in London or Westminster: two for each of the smaller Ridings of this County, and three for the largest one. This measure has been repeatedly considered by the Committee; and the Gentlemen seem to be thoroughly convinced it is the most advantageous way to carry on our operations. In this large County to beat up so wide an extent of ground for signatures to another Petition, would harass and weary all our Friends. To present the old Petition, signed only by the Committee would be feasible enough; but it would have infinitely less weight than a joint Petition from the several Committees of the Petitioning Counties, &c. acting by their Deputies in London. In point of regularity, the same objections might be urged against each mode of proceeding; either that of separate Committees, or this of a General Deputation from all. The objections are not of great validity; and a numerous Deputation will at once annihilate them.

As

As several considerable Bodies which Petitioned against the profuse expenditure of Public money, have not come to any Resolutions to support a Reform of Parliament, great care will be necessary in drawing up the Commission, or Instrument of Instructions to the Deputies, that every expression which may disgust those Bodies may be avoided; and yet the proper authority to the Deputies to proceed upon that most important business may not be omitted. This point therefore will probably be laboured with most particular care and attention, at the next Meeting of our Committee. I should imagine, if the Meeting of Deputies were appointed to be held on the 20th of February, or as soon after as conveniently might be, it would give time sufficient for all the Petitioning Bodies to consider the measure maturely; and our whole force might be collected, before the great questions of Public Frugality, and a Constitutional Reform, would be agitated in the House of Commons.— It is material, that so unusual a Meeting as that proposed to be held, should not sit long, and should act decisively; and yet should observe a proper degree of caution and prudence, and preserve the appearance of regularity as much as possible.

I am, Sir, &c.

C. WYVILL,

NUMBER XXII.

Paper I.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. G. WYVILL.

RUFFORD, January 21st, 1780.

Sir,

YOUR favour of the 17th, did not reach me till yesterday, and I could not answer it by the return of the post without a hurry which would have been ill-suited to the nature of the business, and the importance of the difficulty in question.

These sorts of dilemmas always distress one the more in proportion to the apparent equality of the reasons on each side. I think, however, one should consider, that probably in such cases, the advantages are nearly balanced too; and therefore, in either way of acting one is at least tolerably near the best way. I think the difficulty here really arises from that cause, and that the reason why it is hard to say which is best, is *because* the advantages of the two modes are really pretty nearly balanced. If you should wait

wait a *long* while plainly (though not professedly) to encrease the numbers, the expectations of the Public will be proportionably raised; and, if you then should not come up to a number answerable to that delay, it would have the greatest air of weakness. Come when you will or how you will, the number or the Properties, or the being Freeholders will be disputed about, and depreciated. If you avoid one objection, you will run nearer to another, which will certainly be taken.—I think the *Property* of the Subscribers should enter into the consideration as well as the numbers. You say you judge that 6000 will have signed in a fortnight; now a fortnight from your letter of the 17th, hardly goes beyond the call. And, if among this 6000 there is a strong proportion of property, I should reckon it a very respectable petition: because the grievance complained of is such as must be supposed to be best known to persons of some rank in the world. If 10,000 persons of more retired lives, (from their situations) were to speak of the abuses of office, every body would see that they went upon a weaker degree of evidence than those whose situations put them more in the way of knowing those abuses, as well as of feeling, in common with the rest, the effects of them; and you would be tauntingly asked, *how John and Thomas came to know of these abuses?* and the great number of signatures would be ascribed to diligent Canvassing and telling stories in Ale-houses.

Your

Your next period is *three weeks* or a month:— No two People's imagination will be exactly struck the same way, in these kinds of businesses. They happen seldom, and more is left to fancy and feeling than to experience, but I own, *that one week's difference* between three weeks and a month, strikes me as material. A week past the call (in a grave business and from a large and distant County) feels to me as a small matter; and yet I fear that a second like period added to it would be felt as showing a coldness: and other Counties would be saying where are our Leaders.

In such a case, perhaps, it might be well to desire a Member to mention that such a Petition would soon come, and desire the attendance of the House; or you might leave a discretion in him with the help of Friends advice on the spot.

It seems to me a kind of mixed case in which the prize is not to be won by *mere* speed—nor yet by dint of *mere* numbers, but by a grave, decent, steady proceeding neither languid nor hasty; and supported by a weight of property and by numbers *proportioned* to the time thought proper to give it, whatever that time might be.

It is a very common thing when some Parties have petitioned the House, for any (common Bill) for others more remotely interested, to throw in supplemental Petitions in which they generally (as I dare say you must have observed)
begin

begin "*observing by the votes of the Honourable House that a Petition, &c. &c.*" I hardly think this would apply to the present case, because all the County is supposed to be apprised of the subject matter: yet I just name it as not an impossible mode of acting, if from any circumstance a second fire should kindle; and, any should on second thoughts repent that they did not sign the Petition.

"Mr. Sayer from Halifax, writes to me January 17th, that leaving the Petition at a Public-house they find will not have the effect—which makes it troublesome to wait on the greater part; however, he judges it will be respectably signed from that quarter although it is very much discountenanced by a few."

If this be the general account it argues for delay. I return to what I premised in the beginning, that, altho' something certainly depends on the mode of bringing the business forward (and in many cases, indeed, the whole success turns upon it) yet I think here the great point is, whether the People are roused or not. All the management in the world, nay, false musters (if we were capable of using them) would not avail. If they are not yet awakened either to the iniquity or impolicy of the present measures, nor (if they like the measures) even to the necessity of œconomy, even to the carrying them on; all I can say is, that they do not rightly know yet what they would have,
but

but are seeking for the *execution of foolish bad projects without the means*. That this leads most directly to ruin is very clear; but it is as clear that *We* (Parliament) shall not stop probably till you call upon us; and that you will not call upon us in the right key to be heard, till the sentiment is very general; and we *must* go on till things are *bad enough*. A respectable appearance in London (especially if other Counties send the like) would, doubtless, form a kind of assembly which could not be without its weight. It would shew anxiety; and the anxiety of a considerable body of this kind would give a grave turn to men's minds, if any thing would. I know this is the sentiment of some, and I know no reason on the other side. It is true, you might be made the subject of jest, and called a little Anti-Parliament, &c. &c. &c. so you would, if you *were not really so*. There's no jest like a true jest. If a National Assembly of this kind, carried its genuine marks of dignity about it (without any mace) it would not be laughed at long. You would likewise (on the above supposition of the measure being generally adopted) be at hand to consult.

I am much obliged by your kind anxiety about my health; I have very nearly, tho' not quite shaken off that tendency to a sore throat, which was beginning at York. The worst consequence has been keeping me within doors.

On

On re-perusing this letter, I find it written in a desultory manner; from which, I yet hope, you will be able to gather the whole of my sentiments. Indeed, I do not find it easy to arrange all the *plus* and *minus* quantities on one side or the other, in such a subject as this, and give the precise result. I thought it best to set down *all* that occurred to me, as if I was debating and balancing it in my own mind.

I am, Sir,

With great regard,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper II.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

LONDON, May 25th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

YOUR favour of the 11th, being one of much information to me, and not, I think, requiring an immediate answer, I have been obliged to take the part of postponing it to one
or

or two others, which called upon me for some communication of my thoughts and explanation of the plan I had laid down for my conduct; as to the *one* article which *alone* seems subject (at least chiefly subject for the present) to difficulty or doubt.

I have had occasion, on this head, to write letters to Mr. Foljambe, and at his desire, to my Steward; and since that, I have taken occasion to expatiate pretty strongly on the subject, in a letter inclosing my answer to the Mayor, Recorder, and many respectable Gentlemen of Leeds, who had expressed to me their approbation of the vote I gave for the *bringing in* a Bill (moved by Mr. Sawbridge) for shortening the duration of Parliaments. You readily see, having *so* voted, *while I was yet waiting for my orders*, it behoved me to explain a little particularly the *why* and the *wherefore* of what I had done. That letter may possibly enough become so public, that it may fall in your way, as I laid no restraint on my Correspondent, (Mr. Gamaliel Lloyd, who transmitted to me the thanks above mentioned) but indeed rather suggested the contrary wish.

I have, in all these letters, suggested (amongst other things) that I laboured under a fear of being misled, as to the general sentiment on the subject of triennial Parliaments. I would suppose, many who might have a considerable preference to the triennial Parliaments, who yet
will

will not like to sign the Association, *which in truth says a great deal more*; for it makes that one thing not only desirable or preferable to any other, but preferable to *all other points or qualities whatsoever*. Ability, fidelity, &c. &c. do not even put a man within the possibility of being chosen by a Constituent, who has bound himself to that one quality. Those only therefore will sign Associations, who do see the matter in *this strong light*, for others who do not, certainly will not, who yet may prefer (and considerably too) triennial Parliaments.

And in truth, when I consider that the premises laid down were, “that *when* Influence was “lessened, and Representation equalized, then “triennial Parliaments would do *certain* good, “and be without inconvenience,” one is led to suppose, that the conclusion would have been, that *unless* the two points were obtained, the third was *not of certain good, or clear of inconvenience*, yet the Jockey is nevertheless strictly and unconditionally directed to run for the third heat, whether he had won a heat or no before.

These considerations and the earnest desire I have really to know the sense of the greater and most respectable part of my Constituents, make me regret that there has not been some way thought of simply to extract that one opinion; since it would have precisely the same effect on me, if a Constituent tells me he *wishes* it to be so,

so, as if he told me twenty times he would not chuse me but on that condition. I must, however, lay together all the evidence I can get, and form my judgment as well as the case admits of. The letter from Leeds has added a considerable weight on one side.

I am next about writing to Mr. Milnes on the same subject, but I fear I must excuse myself from entirely falling in with what he seems to express his wishes for. I mean the doing any thing to *lead* that opinion which I want to follow.—I beg my compliments to Mrs. Wyvill.

I am, Dear Sir, with great regard,

Your obliged, and obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper III.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

BIGGLESWADE, July 17th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

YOUR favour, of the 11th, reached me a little, and but a little, before I left London, and the hurry of a great number of little matters which one always has to do, or to leave undone

undone when one is just setting out, has occasioned me to postpone writing till now ; that I take the heat of the day at this place for it.

With regard to the first subject mentioned in your letter, I have only shortly to say that I continue exactly in the same intention as I set out with, and perfectly ready with great pleasure to lend my hand towards the accomplishment of my Constituents' wishes on the head of the duration of Parliaments. I am sure, to say the least of it, it is an experiment they have a right to make if they please ; and I cannot help adding, that, for any great good that Septennial Parliaments have done in my memory, I can by no means wonder that there should be a degree of earnestness to try something different ; at the same time, however, entertaining in my own mind (as I believe I have suggested before) a more promising expectation from the other part of the plan, a meliorated Representation, which indeed, as you know, preceded the alteration of the Term in the original Resolutions.

I amused myself the other day with what I may call a Parliamentary Experiment, the result of which rather confirmed me in the propriety of that precedence given to the adequate Representation even almost as a *sine qua non*, for the making a Parliament such a body as the second Regulation would operate upon :—For it is easy to see that whether a perfectly corrupt

Borough sell itself every three or only every seven years, the chief difference will be such as will exist in the case of any other bargain or lease for a shorter or longer term; viz. a proportionable difference in price—and as to this case the simile perfectly applies of washing one's shirt ever so often if the water be as dirty as the shirt.

The most uncourtly opposition question we have had this year, was when after having voted the "influence of the Crown to be great, &c." we moved to address the King not to prorogue or dissolve us till we had effectually diminished it. We lost it in the proportion of about six to five. Now this was an uphill trying course, an *experimentum crucis* of stoutness against influence. In this question the House being divided into classes shewed themselves nearly in the following proportions:

County Members about 3 to 1 (the 3 being on the side of the minority).

Borough (English) Members about 4 to 3 (the 4 being on the majority side.)

The Members of a certain long County, which sends a great many 8 or 9 to 1 (at the least.)

Scotch Members 9 or 8 to 1 (ditto.)

Cinque Ports about 4 to 1 (ditto.)

Now here are two experiments tried in one. You see how County Members voted in such a very strong question, and you must remember

member that this was in some sort in the middle Session of a Triennial-Parliament. It follows that County Members are either (as we say of cropt horses) good in nature, or that the approach of Elections operated on them, and not the others, who you see by the combination of their 4 to 3—8 to 1—9 to 1—and 4 to 1 overfet the 3 to 1 of the County Members, and brought the whole mixture to a ratio of 6 to 5 against them. This explains to you what I mean by the expression at the bottom of the second page, to make Parliament into such a body as the near approach of an Election would operate upon. I cannot be sure that I give you the numbers correctly, having lost the rough minute I had made of it, in our Civil Wars; the outline of it is correct enough however fully to uphold my conclusion.

The second subject mentioned in your letter gives me I assure you very serious anxiety. It is well worthy the attention of all who may be assembled on the 28th.—I have not with me the copies of the Correspondence on that subject. (It was pretty correct in some of the papers.) I left them in Mr. Hartley's hands, who is or will soon be in Gloucestershire. The order itself, Lord Amherst's two letters to Colonel Twissleton, and the latter end of the Lord President's, in which he says the order must doubtless continue as long as the troops stay in London, seem to me particularly worthy of notice,

for observe, that the order is not to London only but (as I understand) all over England.— Now that because there had been riots in London and the Magistracy had been negligent and insufficient, therefore, the Military should act all over England without the Civil Magistrate, because riots were apprehended and Magistrates might be negligent, is what I do not understand.

I come Sir now (and perhaps you may think I have been long enough in coming) to the business regarding Popish Schools, concerning which I believe you may assure yourself that it neither was in the intention of the framers, nor in the effect of the Bill, to legalise Popish Schools. It is the natural question to ask when any regulation is supposed to be made of an illegal thing. One Lawyer argued on this ground in the House, but I believe in the universal opinion he was unfounded. For an instance, the business of a Smuggler is unlawful, yet a law to punish any crime more severely, if committed by a person in the act of Smuggling, would not legalise Smuggling, or if it was to make an act innocent in a common man, criminal-if committed by a man in the act of Smuggling.

Having said this, I will venture to suggest as a question of prudence, whether all Public notice one way or other of this subject while men's minds are yet warm were not better avoided.— And in truth the Bill (although I think it was all that seemed to be left to be done) was
yet

yet but a small matter. I verily believe the evil was by no means crying. But, let the instances be few or many, it is certainly right to prevent it, for surely the very same reasoning which would allow to the Roman Catholics the education of their own children, entitles us to prevent their tampering with ours. Be the object therefore, great or small, it was certainly right, and if it would contribute to satisfy men's minds who might suppose the evil was more alarming, it was an additional advantage and not to be slighted at such a moment, indeed at any moment, for I do not know the time or occasion when Public satisfaction is not a worthy object of Law-making.

Considering all these circumstances, I wish again to suggest whether it is not the wisest course to let the whole matter subside, and not turn men's minds at all (at least for a time) to the renewal of ideas which have of late occupied our minds so unpleasantly.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your much obliged,

And obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper IV.

Letter to Sir G. SAVILE by the Rev. C. WYVILL.

BURTON-HALL, July 22d, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I Thank you for the favour of your opinion on the subject of my last letter; and I shall certainly follow your advice. If any other person should make a motion to the same effect, I make no doubt, the Committee will defer acceding to it, however highly they may approve the Bill for regulating Popish Schools, when they find that it appears to you improper to meddle with that business at present.—The late abominable riots had for some time a very visible effect to our disadvantage, even in parts of the country, the most remote from danger. But as the consternation subsides, the wishes and affections of the People seem to return into their old channel; and I hope by the 2d of August, the day fixed for the Committee Meeting, the temper of the Yorkshire Freeholders will take in good part any decent Expostulation with Ministry, on their apparent eagerness to employ the army without the usual restraint of civil authority. If you could procure copies of the orders, and Lord Amherst's Letters to Colonel Twisleton, time enough to transmit them to York before the Meeting, might I beg the favour of you to do it? I shall be at York Tavern

on

on the 31st of July. I need not say how exceedingly necessary it is, that we should be perfectly exact and accurate in any Resolutions that the Committee may chuse to adopt, nor consequently how much we shall all feel ourselves indebted for your kind assistance.

With respect to the propositions for a Parliamentary Reform, I must beg leave to say a few words; after having acknowledged the great pleasure I received from observing that your sentiments on those points are very nearly what the Associators profess to hold, you are in fact of that family; the resemblance between you is strong, and a common eye might easily overlook the difference.

What I wish to suggest is this; that in the premises, or the argumentative part of the Form of Association, the preference is given to the addition of County Members, and the propriety of that measure being carried before Parliaments should be shortened, is plainly implied. The order of time, it is true, is not distinctly set down in the conclusion, where the two propositions are mentioned together, and the support of both alike is expected to be engaged for, it might have been more clearly expressed, and it was merely to avoid the slovenliness of repetition, that it was not; which was not a good reason, perhaps in a composition of that kind. I imagined there could be no difficulty to understand the latter clause, as subject to all the limitations expressed or plainly implied in the preceding clauses; and therefore, that ac-

cording to the reasoning of those clauses, the shortening of the duration of Parliament could not be supposed to be engaged for, previous to the obtaining of 100 County Members, because till then it is plainly implied to be a bad measure. But that difficulty might be solved, I should think, by the Committee explaining that to be their intention, or by giving instructions, when they nominate Deputies to the next General Meeting in London, to apply for the several Bills in that order of time. Would such an expedient take off the weight of your objections? If it would, I shall rejoice it has occurred to me. It did occur to me when I received your former letter, stating this and some other difficulties; in my answer to which, I was unwilling to have the appearance of pressing arguments pertinaciously, when I could not expect to be able to offer one, that you had not long ago considered and decided upon in your own mind. I hold you in much too high esteem and respect to trouble you with such an improper debate. But as this particular difficulty is mentioned again in your last letter of the 17th of July, I thought I might endeavour to give an explanation of what was meant in any clauses of the Association with less impropriety, as well as less force upon my own feelings; and I shall have great pleasure, if the explanation, or either of the expedients I have mentioned, afford you any satisfaction.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly and faithfully yours,

C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Paper V.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

NEWCASTLE, August 4th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

HAVING received by to-day's post the favour of your letter, inclosing the Resolutions of the Committee and adjourned Committee on the 2d and 3d of August. I take the opportunity I have, although too late for to-night's post, of returning you my thanks for the communication of them. I had it not in my power to comply with your desire, of sending you the copies of the correspondence regarding the subject of the Military Orders; (*for the Military's acting, &c. and for the disarming the Persons therein specified*) not having brought down with me the copies which I had from the House. I think, however, that all of them had been in the papers. I am very happy, in concurring entirely with the sentiments expressed in the Resolutions regarding the business of the Military Orders; I think them very correct in their matter, as well as temperate in the language and manner. What reasons can be given for the continuance of an Order extending through the Kingdom, although grounded on local and temporary emergency, I own, I cannot well conceive;

ceive; and I think that matter is well pointed at in the 3d Resolution of the 2d page. Your solution, in your former favour, of my difficulty regarding the Precedence of the measure for purifying the sources of Representation, to that for shortening its duration, is perfectly to my mind, *if it be so understood*. You state that the Resolutions being to be interpreted by the Preamble, the 100 New Members are understood to be obtained, before the other can be expected to do good. But, I remember in arguing it somewhat in that way with Lord Mahon, he rather seemed to me to conceive the Preamble was to bend to the more positive directions of the Resolutions, in which the shorter duration (although I think it *follows*) is not made *conditional* on the obtaining the other.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great regard,

Your most obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper VI.

Paper VI.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

NEWCASTLE, *Tuesday evening six o'clock.*
(*Supposed to be September 5, 1780.*)

Dear Sir,

YOUR express found me this morning, drawing towards the conclusion of an address to my late Constituents, and which I had begun on the first intelligence of the dissolution; many interruptions, and being unavoidably engaged out to dinner to day, have obliged me to keep your messenger, for I had a great desire to send my address back by him; and I now venture to beg you to be so good as to get it (correctly) inserted in the two York newspapers, and to be continued, I think, till the election. I am obliged to desire you likewise to get the same inserted in two London papers, of the most public circulation. Indeed, I am ashamed to lay this trouble upon you, but having nothing like a correct copy or foul draught of it, I should lose a great deal of time in making another copy for London.

I cannot, with any degree of convenience come to York on Thursday, neither do I know that it would be useful or right. Whenever the High Sheriff appoints a meeting, my time will

will be to attend. I will beg early notice when it is, least I should miss the papers.

I have endeavoured to express my mind so fully in the address which I inclose, that I think it will stand in the place of any answer or reasoning, I might otherwise insert here regarding my signing the Association.

I do not know that I should have wished so much as you seem to do for the junction: I rather incline to think, it is a time for me to declare my sentiments with freedom, and leave the rest to the feelings of the people. I have long thought, that nothing but *feeling* would do us any good, and whether we have yet felt enough, I know not, and rather think not.

I am sorry to say, we are going to lose a right honest, and Whig Member of Parliament in L. J.* I wish that no less real friends to liberty may sign the Association, or that the loss of him may be made up; I doubt it.

I have hardly had time to correct the punctuation or errors of the pen; if in perusing it, you meet with slips of that kind (for I am an impatient transcriber) pray take the trouble to correct them.

* Lord John Cavendish, who did not satisfy his Constituents at York, that he would vote for Triennial-Parliaments; and therefore, was not re-elected. He was opposed by men who respected his virtues, and wished him to continue their Representative; but who resolutely sacrificed their personal attachment to the superior considerations of honour, consistency of conduct, and the cause of Political Reformation.

I own I am somewhat afraid, I am too late with my advice at the end of the address, and that we have failed for want of that union I recommend so urgently; it cannot be helped now. I say again, we must suffer a little more, small mistakes in management, won't operate when we become a little sorer.

The copy you will have the trouble of ordering for the London papers, you will perhaps like to shew first to the Committee on Thursday: It is a respect I owe them to wish it may be so.

I am in haste,

Dear Sir, with great regard,

Much your obliged and obedient servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper VII.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

NEWCASTLE, Wednesday noon, Sept. 6th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

YOUR last favour, inclosing the copies of the letter to the Sheriff, and of his answer, reached me between five and six this morning.
The

The refusal of the High Sheriff is doubtless a sufficient ground for any respectable body (or competent number) of Gentlemen to call a meeting. The first channel of such matters is the Sheriff. That compliment once paid, common practice, as well as the reason of the thing, points out the other. But it appears to me (and strongly so to a friend or two I am consulting) that such an application ought not to proceed from the Committee *only*, or from the Committee *as Committee*; but to be made by as general a signature (of the most respectable names) as the time allows, and indiscriminately without excluding the friends of any Candidate. As to the time, it seems to depend, perhaps, on circumstances unknown to us. If the operation which is the object of those who call the meeting, is determined upon, and ready prepared for the proposing, surely the meeting cannot be too soon: it is now but 20 days to the election. How can a meeting be well obtained sooner than will be necessary to concert and execute whatever is to be done, to carry its resolutions to effect? On the contrary, if nothing is ready to be proposed, it will make any set of Gentlemen appear to disadvantage, who shall have called such a meeting prematurely.

I continue to think I have no call to the Committee to-morrow, and indeed, as to using any endeavours to alter the conduct of the late Representatives of the City, I could by no means think

think of it, were it in my power, which it by no means is. What motive can he, or ought he to have for acting contrary to his opinion? I take the case to be without remedy. You will lose in him many excellent qualities; but if he does not hold the one opinion necessary by the terms of the Association, it necessarily overbalances all the good on the other side. This I stated in some of my former letters.

* However I do not know that the majority of the Electors of York (nor indeed what number of them) have signed the Association: I have heard no considerable number. If so, he will not be excluded; if he be, who is to serve the City, I cannot guess. Others (excellent Members of Parliament) may be losing their Elections, in other places, at the same time, who would do no discredit to any place, and it will then be too late.

I am unwilling to detain your messenger, and I do not know of any material thing omitted.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

I shall wish to have early notice of the time fixed for the Meeting, day and hour.

Paper VIII.

Paper VIII.

*Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir G.
SAVILE.*

BURTON-HALL, December, 31st, 1780.

Dear Sir,

THE next Meeting of our Yorkshire Committee will be held in a few weeks, the Members, therefore, are beginning to consider who will be proper Persons to be appointed Delegates for Yorkshire, in the intended General Meeting of Deputies in London. On this extraordinary occasion, it is natural their thoughts should immediately turn to you and Mr. Duncombe, in whom they have so lately expressed their utmost confidence, by committing into your hands, in concurrence with the other Freeholders of the County, the ordinary Constitutional Trust, to represent them in Parliament. I wish therefore to consult you on this subject, and to know whether such appointment would be agreeable to you; not doubting you will undertake with zeal and alacrity this additional labour, if your acceptance of the new Deputation shall appear likely to promote the cause of National Reformation. One thing seems clearly necessary, that you and your worthy Colleague Mr. Duncombe, should either be appointed Delegates together

together or be together omitted. Other matters there may be not of so easy discussion, which without compliment or affectation, I leave to your superior judgment to decide. The difficulties I allude to, arise chiefly from these two considerations, whether if the General Deputation should Petition Parliament, it might not be an advantage on the hearing of the Petition to any Member of Parliament in his Parliamentary Capacity, if he were not a Member of that Body from whom the Petition may be presented to Parliament; and, in the next place, whether it may be advisable for you, who are certainly the Leader of the Independent Party, to take a step which may embroil you with the Nobility. How far it may be prudent to risque some degree of disadvantage in these two points of view, for the sake of obtaining superior advantage by the weight and credit the General Meeting of Deputies would derive from your concurrence and co-operation, I do not pretend to judge in this case. I am really in the situation of doubt, to be determined by whatever is your decided opinion. Having with honest sincerity suggested what appears to me to deserve some consideration, I shall only say farther, I wish you may resolve to join the Deputation, because if these difficulties are not material, I am clear your being nominated one of the Yorkshire Deputies, will be a very important advantage.

The inclosed copy of a letter to me from Sir Robert Smyth with my answer to it, will give you a sketch of that plan, which with the necessary corrections seems likely to be adopted on the 3d of January, and at the same time, will give you the satisfaction to see, that Yorkshire still preserves its station of respect among the other Counties.

It will give me great pleasure to hear the business of moving the amendment of our Representation in Parliament is settled to your mind.—And believe me, Dear Sir, I am particularly desirous to hear you are well in health and spirits, being ever most truly yours,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IX.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

LONDON, December 23d, 1780.

Dear Sir,

YOU will probably have been at some loss to account for my long silence, from the 7th or 8th of this month, when I received your favour of the 5th inclosing copies of the Correspondence

respondence with Sir Robert Smyth. If, however, Mr. Hartley has been in the way of receiving a short line I wrote in answer to his inquiry after me, and if he has been likewise in the way of communicating with you, you will have learnt before now that my silence was owing to an unavoidable cause. Indeed, I am yet not stout enough to venture on a very cold journey, (which the season promises) or I should not have been in London now.

I do not entertain a doubt, or the shadow of one, of the perfect impropriety of my or any Member of Parliament being a Delegate, but if it was only the mere speculative *incorrectness*, if I may so call it; or, even the appearance of a want of fit and able Persons of the *Body of the Nation or People*, I should not insist on the objection could any solid advantage be proposed by it: for I have long ago learnt that the things of this world are not to be governed by Grammatical Rules, and that *that is* the best plan which in practice will best attain its object. But here all the objections seem to be on one side, and I dare say the inconveniencies which you suggest and many more would be found to attend the double character of *Member and Delegate*; or, in other words, Member in two Assemblies, the one formed for the very purpose of being (in a Constitutional way) a check upon the other.—At least an *Assembly of Observation*, to use a Military and Sea-Phrase.

I fall in with your opinion very much respecting the steps you seem to have in view, regarding the Parliamentary Reform, if I understand you rightly on that subject. It seems indeed to me too true, that the object of *Fundamental* Parliamentary Reform is not yet either universally or warmly and decisively supported. I mean even out of doors; and it is, I think, a pretty clear proposition, that our House will not *rudely* force the Measure upon their Constituents. Indeed to say the truth, I find no such disposition. The little *in-door* inquiry I have made is rather discouraging. I am sure the best you can expect *from us* is, *vis inertia*, if you are tolerably easy about it out of doors. A slow remedy by diet proposed to a Patient under an acute distemper, is a cold comfortless prospect. Ruin and Calamity are taking much more huge strides than a *poor limping Reform* can do: and at any rate, I assure you, however, we shall never think of it unless actuated by a pretty decided motive (I am at a loss for a word) from without.

My opinion is, shortly, that *we* don't care at all about it. And that *you* (the People) don't yet *care enough* about it to impel us. I desire no better proof than the *Delicacies* which you suggest the necessity of observing, and the nicety in avoiding *all expression which may disgust* in those Public Instruments which are to be calculated to induce the Petitioners for economy,

to be likewise solicitous for a Parliamentary Reform. Now, my Dear Sir, were the People both sensible of their bad treatment, and, likewise under a conviction that the corrective Remedy in question was the proper cure; you would find little need of Temperaments and Cautions not to offend, and Managements to unite, and the like. You would not talk of what you so well express, the difficulty of beating up a wide extent of ground for resignatures.

In truth, as to the first fact, we do but begin to feel that any thing is going wrong; and, as to the second, we are as far from feeling an immediate relation between our Disorder and the Remedy of additional Knights, as a Patient in a fever is from being guided by instinct to such Medicines as Science, and the Faculty prescribes.

The remedy prescribed is perhaps a Blister.— The remedy of Instinct is to toss and tumble to the cold side the bed, or get at some cold water, or to jump out of the window. You are labouring in a very good Work if you can so watch that fever, (*which you must expect at the crisis*) and so regulate its pulse, that some other remedy but Civil War may be administered. I know you trust to a sort of a mock Fever or irritability which you can guide to the Public good. I doubt it.

From many circumstances of detail, (regarding our anticipating Revenues, so that the

burden laid on the People, is so far from being felt, that it is not yet even in sight ;) I say from these circumstances and others, the People are behind-hand two or three years in their apprehensions. It has been said repeatedly, *surely they will feel this year*. I have always said, *not yet*. I have been many times right; I shall say so still, for I can but be *once wrong*. I shall then be so with a vengeance I fear.

And don't suppose it a sure thing that the storm will all break on the heads of those we call the Authors of our calamities. *We* can't point the lightening by *our* Conductors.

I have wandered much from my subject and indeed from my intention.

I chiefly mean to apprise you in time that as it at present appears to me, the proposition of 100 Knights, without general *unartificial* and hearty recommendation from *without*, will stand little chance within; nor will it come, (to all appearance) within that line which according to the 2d of the Conditions mentioned at York, will make it advisable to stir in: I mean that of a *creditable support*. It has indeed been advised by some, to go by steps in this matter, and only move *first* a Proposition, That the *Representation is inadequate*. This certainly may be much easier carried than any thing *specific*, and why? *Because it is nothing specific*. So the influence of the Crown was readily voted too great, &c. A number of Persons like to vote in
a popular

a popular theoretick Question, *provided it lead to no unmannerly effective consequences.*

Yet it may be a question, whether prudence may not dictate getting this one step, as a foundation. If you try the next and lose it, you still stand at least as well, having got the first assertion established, as you would have stood had you gone directly to the specific Question. The pruder Members seem to incline to this, (I mean of a very few I have consulted) and this is proof enough that their minds misgive them on the support of the effective Question.

If I have succeeded as well in tiring you as I have myself, I am sure it is time to subscribe myself, with my best compliments to Mrs. Wyvill,

Dear Sir, with great regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

P 4

Paper X.

Paper X.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL,

LONDON, January 26th, 1781

Dear Sir,

I Am returned from the Country, having in good measure accomplished the purpose of my journey, the getting rid of my complaint; and by the means proposed (which I endeavoured most diligently to pursue) viz. *idleness, lounging*, and as far as might be, *thinking of nothing*. Some little necessary matters however employed the last two or three days, which I spent at Rufford, having passed the rest of the time at Lord Scarborough's, in a quieter way than I should have done at home, had I passed as usual my Christmas there. You may imagine that the above plan, was not suited much to keep my accounts very even in point of correspondence; and, as an honest Bankrupt divides equally to all, without partiality even to his best friends, I have been obliged to postpone every thing, but such as required immediate answers. But because I have postponed, I have not forgot my thanks to you for the communications of the Papers, both before and when printed; and tho' this is but a scanty return for the value received, yet I was unwilling longer to delay it, altho' it may not probably be long before I have the pleasure of seeing you in Town; yet I find that

that to enter into discussions of every point upon paper, is more than the time allows. In the excellent Address from the Committee of Association, there is much truth, at the same time, that perhaps every part of it may not tend so perfectly to conciliate numbers, and to encrease Strength, as to establish Principles, and bear Testimony to Doctrines, I lament, however, that if these two objects do not constantly go together, it may perhaps be in the nature of the business that it should be so. He who will maintain his opinion whole and untouched, does irreproachably: but he must not expect the advantages of conciliation. It is perhaps more virtuous to *suffer on, as I firmly believe we shall do*; for I do not yet see any means within reach, by which an alteration is to be made. I see the people (from whom we ought perhaps to expect all) unable if they were willing, and unwilling if they were able; and I think, if they were both willing and able, yet not knowing very well how to set about it; nor are we ready to accept of any alliance, but with such as mix no impurities with their public views. I fear, as you do, the number of the Allies must be small. What the People who are not Electors can do (but resist) I don't know; and what the People who *are* Electors will do, I know too well. We divided on the Dutch War last night 101 to 180.

The only possible way therefore seems to mend the Representative Body. Aye! but in the
above

above state of things, is there a probable prospect of doing this, when it is to be done by the Body itself? I repeat, however, that it seems the proper attempt to make whenever a plan is proposed, and there is an appearance (altho' not of success) of creditable support. I fear you may think me a despairing Councillor, but I own I cannot in the present prospect make out sanguine hopes enough, to induce me to make a more flattering Representation.

I have got by degrees into a melancholy Dissertation, which I did not intend. Perhaps the gloomy sky, and the sad figure we made last night, has contributed to it, and makes me see things thro' too dark a medium.

Dear Sir, with true regard,

Your most obedient,

And obliged humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper XI. *Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir G. SAVILE.*

BORTON-HALL, November 11th, 1781.

Dear Sir, **A** FEW days after the Meeting on the 17th of October at York, I sent from Thirsk a manuscript copy of the Address, directed to you at Morpeth. It went by one of the Northern Diligences. And I believe the packet would reach Morpeth about the time when
your

your corps marched from that neighbourhood ; in all probability, therefore, you have never received it. What adds much to my perplexity is my having sent off all my printed copies to other Gentlemen, as soon as I got them from York ; and now not having received another cargo, I am unable to send you a copy either of the quarto or the octavo edition.

Your going into winter quarters so early, has also disappointed me much in another respect. In your letter from Northallerton, you were so kind as to mention your design to have called at Burton in your way from York Races, if somewhat unforeseen had not prevented you : I was at that time at Hartlepool, busy with the Address. But if your camp had not been unexpectedly broken up sooner, I believe this year than before, I might, perhaps, have had the pleasure to see you here on your march Southward ; and I should have been very happy to have talked over the subject of the *Second Address*, and the Proposal for a *Conciliatory Overture* ; and, although that Proposal had failed, to have tried with you, whether any other expedient for the same purpose could be found, or any step could be taken to render that proposition more acceptable to the Nobility on the one hand, and to the Committee on the other. But chance has deranged all my scheme ; and I write now, totally ignorant where this will find you ; and whether I can have any opportunity

opportunity of waiting upon you, before you go up to town. If you design to be at Rufford, any time before you attend Parliament, I hope it will be in my power to pay my respects there, when I know you have a little leisure; I shall have the greatest pleasure in doing so; and, I know of no engagement at all likely to disappoint me, for as to Deputation it is not thought of this winter.

Believe me ever, Dear Sir,

With great regard,

Most truly and sincerely yours,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XII.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

LUMLEY CASTLE, Nov. 21st, 1731.

Dear Sir,

I DO not at all wonder that you should be under much perplexity at the long silence that has been on my part, since you sent the manuscript addressed to Morpeth; although it did not reach me exactly in course, yet it was by no means delayed (by my not being there) in such a manner as to account for my not writing.

writing. The place this is dated from, will better explain it. There seeming nothing left to depend upon my answer, I deferred a detailed one such as I proposed to write till our removal from the North took place, which was soon after the receipt of it. Since that I have been confined here by a disagreeable attack in the old way, too much deranged, indeed, to give my mind to so much thought as the subject required. I am getting well again, and mean in a day or two to trouble you with a few more lines upon it. Finding the post does not go to-morrow, I send you this short acknowledgement of the rest, both of your Manuscripts and of a printed Address; as, likewise your last letter sent to Rufford. I am not sure yet when I can leave this place. My best compliments wait on Mrs. Wyvill.

Dear Sir, with great regard,

Your obliged and most obedient servant,
G. SAVILE.

Paper XIII.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

LUNLEY CASTLE, November 24th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE short line I wrote to you the other day, will have in some measure accounted to

to you for the time that has elapsed since my receipt of your favour; and of the Manuscript and printed Copies of the Second Address. I set about yesterday to perform as well as I could, the promise I had made to give you my sentiments somewhat at large upon it, but, not being yet quite well, I have not been able to draw out my thoughts in a way fit (even to my own apprehension) to convey them to you: and, I therefore, think it better to refer it to some opportunity, when I may have the pleasure of conversing more at large on the subject, than writing will well admit of. And the rather as nothing in the mean-time, waits for it; and the whole is now more a matter of speculative discussion, than of Counsel and Debate.— I have been indeed literally performing Penelope's work; having spent yesterday in writing to you, and spinning a long Political Web; which my second and better thoughts on my pillow, have advised me to throw aside. A part, however, of my letter occasioned me no perplexity; and called for no measured terms or delicacy of expression; I could not too strongly express the full assent I give to the introductory part, pointing out in their course and order the causes of our present situation.— I do not know whether it be a kind of self-complacency, which makes me approve with more than common relish, some parts of that deduction of causes which I seem to myself as I
read

read it, to have already made in my own mind. This is said, I think by Swift, to be the truest praise, when one cries out, *this is excellent—this falls in with my way of thinking exactly.*—I need add nothing as to the execution; I know that better judges by far than I, give it its due praise.

As to the rest, that I may avoid tiring you and myself with such a letter as you narrowly escaped yesterday, let me restrain myself to the expression of my sincere wishes that every good effect you look for, may be the result of this publication. But there being yet open a fundamental question, on which opinions may be various, regarding the better *means* of pursuing the Public Object; it is impossible to say whether this Address is calculated to ensure *those means*. Some may think a union, if it be possible should be proposed, in a case where certainly all forces united, are not more than adequate to the work. Some again may conceive that such apparent union would be hollow and false; and some again, that it very little matters one way or other. This last class may be well set aside. In the mean-time the Protest and Manifesto, as a matter of controversy, is certainly very ably drawn; and doubtless it is not only material, but the incontestable right of the *popular Agents*, to vindicate their own Principles, to explain their Conduct, and to discriminate their Sentiments from those held by Persons

sons of different persuasions. And the rather, as it is done in a manner very respectful; and in some places so honourable to those persons, that had no less kind sentiments ever been unluckily supposed to be entertained, I could, perhaps, have conceived more sanguine expectations of an union.

I shall be happy to see any practical proof of what you chearfully declare, that the people are yet uncorrupted, and that (supposing them so) they possess likewise that *power* without *force*, and (by virtue of their right alone) that momentum without *motion*, which will be sufficient to overthrow that system of despotism and ruin, which I fear they will neither apprehend nor understand till they feel it, and the work is done *effectually*. I own I should as much expect to see the spirit and foresight of a covey, defeat the designs of the setting dog and the sportsman, who very quietly and silently are spreading their light and gentle nets over them.

I have again encroached on my resolution, and am getting into a more detailed argument than I intended. I applaud all those very much, who do not despair of the Republic.

I am so forgetful as not to recollect who is meant by the noble Person, who (when the Duke of Richmond's plan of extensive Representation was so wisely given up) co-operated with his Grace in labouring for a general Coalition. It is impossible not to enquire after a name recorded in the Address, with such peculiar

liar and strongly distinguished praise: a praise which I doubt not will have a double effect. I should have been very happy to have seen you at Rufford, I am now soon going to Sandbeck, and incline to think I must not venture to Parliament. It is not impossible but I may pass my Christmas at home, and I should then think myself very happy to see you.

Dear Sir, your obliged, &c.

G. SAVILE.

Paper XIV.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

HULL, September 21st, 1782.

Dear Sir,

A Little teizing return of an asthmatic kind, which I have now shaken off, together with a business of a pressing kind in point of time, has hitherto prevented my acknowledging the favour of your letter of the 10th instant. You cannot lament more truly than I do on a public or private account, the late unhappy and untimely loss. It may seem to deserve peculiarly the latter epithet, because, at least to a common observation, it has been the apparent cause, or at least the signal of disunion, at a time when union seemed most desirable; nevertheless, I have sometimes had a leaning towards an opinion, that if there was any thing hollow, any point

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on which (when it came to the test) a fundamental diversity of views would have shown itself, and that the whole Fabric stood only on the precarious tenure, of being held together by the conciliating and delicate hand of our regretted Friend, the real difference in this respect is not so great as it may appear. I speak this as to the *untimeliness*; for surely with regard to the *intrinsic loss*, it is not easy to err on the side of over-rating it.

I am sure it exceeds all my power of prophecy, to foretell what is now to ensue either on the head of *measures*, or of other points more directly regarding the *Constitution*. It is a matter of too great delicacy for me to meddle with, in the present question, on which you flatter me with asking my opinion, to hazard an advice where so much may turn on the characters of Persons. If you think the decision *does* turn upon that point, you must follow your own judgment in it: but it may be, that the discussion of that point may not appear to be immediately necessary. It may be, or it may appear to you, that you may avail yourself of the means offered you, and do it safely too, without troubling yourself about the motives or the principles of the offerer. If it should appear to you that this is the case in the present instance, why should you lose an opportunity, and waste the present moment in an enquiry after the sincerity or the principles of the person who gives you that opportunity. If the wind be in a favourable

able quarter, why stay to investigate the causes of it; instead of spreading your sails to catch the gale which will waft you smoothly to your Port. If on the contrary, you think it of material consequence to know the real motives of those you have to do with; and if you fear that you might be led (by a *specious appearance of right*) to cunningly-devised consequences; you will naturally be very cautious: you will apply the *dona ferentes*, and you will guard against being the instruments of what you may not approve, while you imagine you are using and directing the power lent you by others, to your own purposes: this is all I dare venture to say on the subject.

I hope it does not appear to you that I artfully *evade* your question. I *profess* that I mean to *avoid* entering into it, so far as it may depend on the characters of persons, and it is therefore that I restrain myself rather to the stating it, than attempting the solution of it.

I have been applied to on the subject of a Meeting in Nottinghamshire, and have added my signature to that of some respectable Persons at the foot of an Address to the High Sheriff, but I have heard nothing of it since, nor seen any Advertisement. I hope your stay at Harlepool will be as long as you propose, as it will be a mark of the benefit Mrs. Wyvill reaps from the situation. I am, with my best compliments to her,

Dear Sir, your obliged, &c.

G. SAVILE.

NUMBER XXIII.

Paper I.

*Letter of thanks to Sir G. SAVILE from the Mayor
and many other principal Inhabitants of Leeds.*

LEEDS, the 13th May, 1780.

Sir,

WE whose Names are underwritten, Inhabitants of Leeds, beg leave to return you our sincere thanks, for the Vote you gave in the House of Commons on the 8th instant, in favour of short Parliaments.

J. MICKLETHWAIT, Mayor.

J. BUCK, Recorder.

JAMES KENNION.

JER. DIXON, &c.

Paper II.

*Letter from GAMALIEL LLOYD, Esq; to Sir
G. SAVILE.*

LEEDS, the 13th May, 1780.

Sir,

I Have the honour of transmitting to you the thanks of several of the Gentlemen, Magistrates and

and principal Inhabitants of this Borough, for the Vote you gave in favour of Mr. Sawbridge's Motion. This has very much raised our Spirits, and we now flatter ourselves, that the Whigs united upon truly Whiggish and Constitutional Grounds, will be an overmatch for their Opposers. For my own part, I must confess that no circumstance during the present Session, not even the glorious Majority on Mr. Dunning's Motions, gave me half so much satisfaction, as seeing Sir George Savile's name among the Advocates for short Parliaments. On this account, the Leeds Gentlemen by appointing me to transmit to you their grateful Acknowledgments, have done me a singular pleasure, and especially as it affords me an opportunity of assuring you of the respect, &c.

GAMALIEL LLOYD.

Paper III.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the MAYOR of Leeds

LONDON, May 20th, 1780.

Sir,

I BEG you to accept yourself, and to be pleased to present likewise to the rest of the Gentlemen my best Acknowledgments, for the honour

honour you have done me, in the notice you have taken of the part I took in the Motion, made by Mr. Sawbridge on the 8th instant. It must always be very satisfactory to me, to find I have gone along with the wishes of my employers. This is a case, in which more peculiarly the mind and wishes of the Constituent Body, should draw the attention of the Representative. I have enlarged somewhat on this subject, in a letter inclosing this, which I have requested Mr. Lloyd to communicate to you. I am unwilling to risk losing the post to night, which in truth I am nearly doing, and will detain you no longer, than while I assure you of the respect, with which I am yours, and the other Gentlemen's much obliged, and most obedient servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper IV.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to GAMALIEL
LLOYD, Esq.

LONDON, May 26th, 1780.

Sir,

IT was at my return home late last night, that your favour of the 15th came to my hands, inclosing a packet (a very valuable one to me)
from

from the Mayor, Recorder, and many other respectable Gentlemen, inhabitants of Leeds. I must beg to add to your trouble, by requesting you to take the fittest opportunity of presenting the inclosed answer with my best respects.

Whatever may be the variety of opinions respecting the instructions of Constituents, I trust, there cannot be two sentiments regarding the infinite satisfaction it must be to a Representative, to find that he has acted conformably to the wishes and opinions of a respectable body of those who have sent him, and more especially in a question of the first and most public consequence.

This satisfaction I shall endeavour to express in a few words, as well as I am able; I dare say, however, it will be still short of what I feel on the occasion: but there is something peculiar in the nature and circumstances of the present business respecting me, which makes me esteem it necessary to enlarge a little more than is usual in such a case; explanations appearing only necessary in general, when there has been a difference of sentiment. I believe it is pretty generally known, both by what I declared at York, and by what I have since confirmed by some letters, that the question of the duration of Parliaments, seemed to me *that one point* of all others, which remains if one may so express one's self, in some sort the exclusive right of the Constituent to judge of for himself: a right re-

served as it were, from amongst the powers which he Delegates to his Representative, that I thought it might be called with some propriety, rather a point *about* Parliaments than in Parliaments; and that I should therefore, as to that question, make the *prevailing wishes of my Constituents* (when I knew them) *the absolute rule* of my conduct. My expression was, that in that point, I should vote *obediently*. My informations had been since that time of various kinds, and during that period, Mr. Sawbridge moved the House for leave to bring in a Bill, to shorten the duration of Parliaments. I could not long hesitate what part to take; to vote against the *leave to bring in*, was at once to shut the door in its face, and put an end to all discussion of the question; whereas if leave were given to bring it in, the matter was still open to deliberation. And besides the error (if even it should be against the general sense of my Constituents) was certainly still on the better side; because I doubtless do a less personal injury to him, who wishes to send me for seven years, by returning for his choice at the end of three, than I should do to him, who chuses to recall me at three years by staying seven. I call it a personal injury, because, *considering it as a general Constitutional point*, he has an equal right to *have his will executed*, be it which way it may. I accordingly voted for the Motion: The success you are acquainted with. My final determination

tion however being to turn on one issue, viz. *the weight of the wishes and opinions of my Constituents*, the very letter I was honoured with last night, has doubtless put a considerable weight in one of the scales, and in that light, I likewise feel myself therefore directed and helped so far, as well as obliged by it, as it tends to afford me that information, which I so earnestly wish to have of the balance of my Constituents' opinions. This leads me naturally to mention a circumstance of an opposite kind, and which on the contrary may tend to mislead me, and to disguise the true state of the Public opinion; this will take some little explaining. He who signs the Association declares that he will vote for no man, who he is not convinced will vote for short Parliaments. Now I can suppose many Persons, to have in their minds a considerable preference for that measure, who yet are not so earnestly bent upon it that they would make it an absolute condition. For it is one thing to say *I prefer triennial Parliaments; I like the Member the better who will vote for them.* And it is another to say, that were a man in every other respect such as I could wish, were he wise, honest, able, incorruptible, yet I should reject him, if he wanted the one thing needful. Many may entertain the first mentioned sentiment, who may not go the length of the latter, and I can imagine that this very thought has lessened the number of Subscribers, by excluding many who really wish in
a considerable

a considerable degree for the measure, and yet do not like to bind themselves so absolutely. I can suppose, for instance, that even some who have done me the honour of subscribing the letter in question, may yet not have signed the Association; and yet (supposing it to be so) do you imagine that their opinion, thus declared, has a jot less weight with me, than if they had ever so solemnly bound themselves not to vote for me but on that condition: certainly not, because it tells me plainly their wishes, and it is the wishes of my Constituents, I ardently desire to know and to conform to: a hundred Associations could tell them to me no plainer. Now I could very much have wished that some mode could be adopted, for such as may have declined signing the Association on the ground above mentioned, to signify their inclinations in this matter. For want of this we may remain in the dark, as to many persons whose sentiments may never be declared at all, because there is but one way prepared to declare them, and that way they disapprove for the reasons stated above. I was the rather unwilling to let slip this, which seems a very proper opportunity of writing on the subject, because I have some reason to believe it has been in some instances the case, and therefore, although the inclosed letter may properly be called my public or more formal answer, (a mark of respect, and a return I am sure, very due to that I have received) yet I consider

consider this as substantially more the Letter of business, and beg that you will therefore, not only communicate it together with the inclosed, but likewise use it in any manner that you may think most proper, so as to render it the most effectual as to the object of it. It is quite at your disposal for that purpose, I have only to desire your excuse for so long a letter, and to desire you to accept my thanks for your very obliging one, and to subscribe myself, with great regard,

Sir, your obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper V.

Letter written by GAMALIEL LLOYD, Esq; in concert with other Gentlemen of Leeds to Sir G. SAVILE,

LEEDS, the 29th May, 1780.

Sir,

I HAD the honour of your's of the 20th instant, together with a letter directed to the Mayor, both which I communicated to the Gentlemen concerned. We are all greatly obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in giving

giving us your sentiments, and for the con-
 descending deference you pay to the opinions
 of your Constituents, regarding a point *about*
 Parliaments. This encourages me to enlarge
 upon the subject of the latter part of your let-
 ter, and at the same time to explain the motives
 that induced myself, and several of my acquaint-
 ance to join the Association: a measure we
 esteem *necessary* that the People may understand
 one another the better, and that the same argu-
 ments and ways of thinking may bind them
 together, and make them act as one body,
 instead of so many individuals; and what re-
 commends the Association the more, is, that it
 has been promoted by so many Gentlemen of
 large independent fortunes, who from education
 and other circumstances, have had much better
 opportunities of being rightly informed in Po-
 litics than ourselves. With regard to your
 voting obediently, we know Sir George Savile
 votes through principle, but we want to oblige
 other people who are not actuated by the like
 virtuous motives, to pay the same regard to
 their Constituents' wishes; and therefore we
 look upon *their* assenting to the articles of
 the Association, as a necessary security given to
 the people. You observe, "there may be many
 " who prefer triennial Parliaments, and that
 " like the Member better who will vote for
 " them, but who may say, were a man in every
 " respect such as we could wish, were he wise,
 " honest,

"honest, able, incorruptible; yet shall we re-
 "ject him, because he wants that one thing
 "needful." Our sentiments on this subject
 are these; could there be a House of Commons
 composed entirely of men of independent prin-
 ciples, and who acted solely from the dictates
 of cool unprejudiced reason, we might rest con-
 tented were Parliaments everlasting, but this
 we know can never be expected from the pre-
 sent state of human nature: we daily see honest
 independent Gentlemen overpowered by a croud
 of persons, insensible of the wishes of the people,
 and directed by Ministers of State. The House
 of Commons itself has declared, that there is
 an undue influence of the Crown, to which we
 in the Country add, that there is a still greater
 and more unconstitutional influence of Lords
 and other great Men by their property in the
 Boroughs: an influence *very dangerous in itself,*
 and more so as it is the greatest support of the
 influence of the Crown. Through the want of
 public virtue, the only check there is left to op-
 pose to these two, is *the influence of the people at*
large; and it is our opinion, founded upon the
 maturest consideration, that the influence of the
 people would be best kept up, and promoted by
 short Parliaments, and a *more equal Representa-*
tion in the House of Commons. Till a Reformation
 in these points takes place, the virtuous inde-
 pendent Gentlemen have it not *in their power* to
 serve their Country effectually; therefore, though
 a Member

a Member be wise, honest, able and incorruptible; though he should persevere and be undismayed at fatigues and disappointments, yet till the undue influence of the Crown and of Lords &c. be counterbalanced by the influence of the People, all his virtues and abilities, *with regard to Politics* will be almost lost to the public. On that account, many may think it their interest *in a Political light* to prefer a man of infinitely less merit, but who will use his utmost endeavours (by promoting short Parliaments and a more equal Representation) to put it *into his own power* when an occasion offers, of becoming *essentially* serviceable. The House of Commons have hitherto only struck at the *immediate* influence of the Crown; but we fear equally its constant Auxiliary, the influence of Lords and other Proprietors of Boroughs. It is a melancholy consideration, that the little Boroughs are corrupted by the public Treasures, but we look upon it as a much worse evil for them to be without a struggle, the Slaves of Aristocratic Power. If they are so far independent, as to have the liberty of selling themselves to the best bidder, there is at least a chance of their becoming sometime virtuous; but if they are another man's absolute property, they are lost forever. I beg you will excuse the freedom with which I write; I should not have presumed to have taken up your time so long, had I not been able to assure you from my own knowledge,

ledge, that these are in general the sentiments of a great many of your friends in these parts.

I remain with great respect, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GAMALIEL LLOYD.

The Mayor informed Sir George that he called a Meeting, where Sir George Savile's Letter to himself and that to Mr. Lloyd were read, and also Mr. Lloyd's answer, which was unanimously approved of as containing the general sentiments of the People, &c. Mr. Lloyd's answer was sent inclosed in the Mayor's letter.

NUMBER XXIV.

Paper I.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Viscount
MAHON.

NORTHALLERTON, Sept. 29th, 1780.

My Dear Lord,

I AM authorized by Sir George Savile to assure you, that he has no objection to take the lead in moving the great question, for meliorating the Parliamentary Representation, by
the

the addition of one hundred Knights. But at the same time, he desires it may be well understood, he thinks it highly improper to agitate that question in the next Session of Parliament, unless a rational and feasible plan can first be prepared; and unless it shall appear, such prudent plan will be supported by the bulk of the Minority in Parliament. The first condition Sir George considers, as absolutely and indispensably necessary; the other condition, will admit a less strict and rigorous interpretation.

I have only to observe, farther, on my own part, that these are restrictions which honest policy seems plainly to point out; and which, I therefore trust your Lordship will think it expedient to adopt. But admitting the propriety of these limitations, which I do most explicitly; especially in a matter of this extraordinary magnitude; I flatter myself a strict observance of them will not retard the intended proposition. There is certainly time sufficient to prepare a rational and well considered plan; and from the success of the popular Candidates in many Elections, and from other recent events, there is reason to hope the plan will be supported not only by a respectable body of friends who have taken an early and an active part in promoting it, but also by the united Powers of opposition of every description and denomination.

I am, my Dear Lord, with the truest esteem,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir G. SAVILE.

HARTLEPOOL, October 14, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I Deferred sending you the inclosed copy of my letter to Lord Mahon, till I could at the same time communicate his answer, which I did not receive till last night, from its misdirection to Burton. His Lordship's observation on your *second condition* is not quite what I could have wished it to be; but notwithstanding some variation of sentiment here, I am persuaded you are agreed in the most material part of the business. Lord Mahon dreads the mischiefs of procrastination. You wish to guard against the fatal effects of an unrespectable commencement, which might throw a damp upon the cause that never could be got over.—The evils on either side are by no means imaginary or of slight consideration; they are real and important evils; but, I suppose on the one hand, that you are not for procrastinating the attempt, if there is a good assurance of respectable support; and on the other hand, if there were no grounds for expecting such support, that Lord Mahon would certainly admit pro-

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craftination to be the less evil. The question then is simply this—Will there be a respectable body to support the proposition? I hope the answer to this question will form the point of union on this momentous business, between yourself and Lord Mahon.—If a considerable number of friends to the question may be depended on; with a probability of their increase in number and reputation, and with no manifest hazard of a rupture with those respectable Members of opposition, who may at present decline joining in the attempt: I think if I do not misunderstand the terms of your second condition, that you will not scruple to place yourself at their head; where I believe, most part of your Friends in Yorkshire wish to see you. Whether these favourable circumstances may be relied on, you are infinitely better able to judge, than I can pretend to be. But as I have already hinted, in the light and situation in which they appear to me, I cannot help flattering myself, there is nothing which in your more mature and extensive consideration of the subject, will be found to discourage the undertaking. I shall be very happy to hear you confirm my supposition; as I must confess my hopes of any material advantage to the Public, from the late popular Meetings and Associations, greatly depend on the part you resolve to take.

After spending a few days in Cleveland, I shall return to Burton, where I shall have a most particular

particular pleasure in seeing you and Mr. Hartley, and hope it may be convenient sometime before you go up to the Meeting of Parliament.

I am ever my Dear Sir,
Most faithfully yours,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

NEWCASTLE, October 17th, 1780.

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged by your communication of the correspondence between Lord Mahon and you. I grow every day more sensible how necessary it is, *if one has a mind to do a thing*, to use the means *by which it may be done*. If I want to lift a great piece of timber, I condescend to use pullies and purchases: If to cut it in two, I take a saw; I take a *band* saw if it is a piece I can cut; I call a *man* to help me in the saw-pit, if it be a great tree which any body would laugh at me for attempting by myself.—*Men* are the instruments in the present case.

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In all great public attempts of alteration :— there are pretty regularly two opinions, which may not only plausibly but very fairly and honestly be maintained by men of different casts of understandings, or (what is more the truth perhaps) of different tempers. These two are :

That the thing wished for should not be attempted, unless it be tolerably likely to succeed. That a baulked attempt may discredit ; or, to use a vulgar phrase, *damn* it for ever. At least, that its being so ill supported as to get a degree of ridicule thrown upon it, is almost fatal to all future hopes ; nay pernicious even to *other novelties*. It will be made a bye-word and example of, and every new scheme will call to mind the *visionary* scheme, (as it will be called) which will be thrown in your teeth, by all future opposers of every amendment.

The other opinion is, that the right thing cannot be too often or too strenuously attempted ; that to fail in a great attempt is glorious ; that it keeps the fire alive.—In short, that a truly great man should pursue conscientiously what is right, supported or unsupported ; succeed or not succeed ; he has done his duty ; let others do theirs, *Liberavi animam*, &c. I am not accountable for consequences, I have done my part.

Each of these doctrines is sometimes true ; and they both may in many cases be *bona fide* held ;

held; but as all things have a dark side as well as a fair one: An enemy will say of the first—that it is from some temporising motive, and from narrow considerations of party and connections, that this pretended moderation is affected; a mean fear of standing out with a few, or even alone in the face of Court power and influence. Every body's imagination will suggest more of the same kind of accusation, to which this line of conduct is evidently liable.

The dark side of the other in like manner is, that to attempt an essential alteration without waiting for the best moment, seems like a desire not to succeed. That of all popular things the most popular is to *fail* (by a corrupt majority) in an attempt which is either really advantageous; or what will do better, is a good and taking sound in the ears of the People. That therefore, the very best game for a popular leader, is in the first place (and as the first essential) to fix upon some abuse *he is sure he cannot correct*—or if there be danger of its being a *practicable thing*; by all means to seize the opportunity of pushing it when, by what he knows of parties and connections, *he knows it will not do*: He has then all the glory and runs no risk. You will easily add in your mind, likewise, every thing that is natural for an enemy to say on that side; I should add too, that the smaller the number, the greater share of glory. I be-

lieve you are not at a loss to judge which way my opinion goes; and of consequence that I must be content to abide (and without murmuring) the censure which, as I have said, naturally belongs to that side of the question. Lord Mahon, seems to entertain the contrary opinion, and it is a very maintainable one.

There is always some degree of affectation when one says, one prefers the opinion of another to one's own; or, in other words, that one verily believes one is mistaken, or that one thinks what one thinks not true.

On the other hand, I am sure it would be very great presumption in me to presume, I am in the right and Lord Mahon in the wrong.

I will digress a little to a general sentiment or two, which for my own sake as well as yours, I will lap up in as little compass as I can.

I look upon it, there are as the world goes, but two practical modes of obtaining a considerable change in great public Regulations; by the means of a Party; or, by the means of the People. (I do not now mean outward force.) Now the People never are alarmed *in time* or by *principles*. They never object to filken bands.—Mr. Lockit, presents you with a nice pair of polished fetters, which become any Gentleman charmingly.—Who felt the military order? has it not been tried on for three months? it is taken off again *at pleasure* as it was put on. Is your neck galled? was not the yoke well lined, stuff,

rust; and very soft? (How much more terrible a Mob?) Clap his neck poor-fellow, and give him some corn, and we'll try it on again to-morrow.

Seeing the People will seldom be alarmed till they feel—and *since they do not yet feel*—you deceive yourselves in supposing the People are with you.

It is then the duty, if you would attempt to correct an evil principle before the People feel, (which is rather late) it is the duty, I say, of all parties who from good, bad, and indifferent motives, happen to be enlisted against Power, to bring in their several forces, for all sorts of motives (good, bad, and indifferent of course) and join in any one good thing they can agree upon. *And if they cannot agree*, then to wait with patience till they can: or lastly, till the people call out from their feelings. The latter is very undesirable, if it can be forestalled; because, as the People are not quick enough in resisting *bad beginnings*, so they rush on *when they do begin* and *may make bad endings*; or, if all ends well, it may be by more bloody means than I wish either to see or take a part in. Here ends my digression.

Having premised that Lord Mahon and myself are equally entitled to our opinions, and by no means flattering myself that any thing I have said, should make a change in his: One thing remains clear; it is a maxim of the pro-

feſſion, I am juſt now exerciſing, that every expedition ſhould be intruſted rather with the officer, who thinks it ſhould be undertaken, than with him who thinks it ſhould not. Lord Mahon, is clear it ſhould be attempted without my laſt condition; I am clearly of a contrary opinion. All the difference it makes is only who makes and ſeconds it. This difference will all be to its advantage, and I will ſupport it with perfect fidelity and a true deſire to ſucceed, whatever my deſponding turn of mind may ſuggeſt to the contrary.

Please to obſerve that I ſuppoſe the firſt condition fulfilled, *even for me to ſupport it*; for I muſt be excuſed if I avoid taking a part in any undigeſted plan made up for a day's oppoſition-flouriſh only. I ſhould not like the ridicule which would attend carrying ſuch a motion, (by ſome fortuitous circumſtance perhaps) and then being aſked for the plan or the bill, only to have to ſay, that, thinking ourſelves ſure not to carry it, we had indeed not thought of it or looked ſo forward.

On the other hand pleaſe likewise to underſtand that by a ſtrong ſupport, I do not mean any thing perſonal. If the King of France had brought in a majority of the preſent Parliament, and they would vote for a queſtion I liked, I would introduce it. A ſtrong inſtance of this I have given.

I entertain

I entertain hopes of seeing you before long, but the time I cannot fix, as it depends on some operations here.

Dear Sir, with true regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper IV.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Viscount MAHON.

BURTON-HALL, October 21st, 1780.

My Dear Lord,

YOUR favour of the 5th found me at Hartlepool, from whence copies of both your Lordship's letter and mine, to which it was an answer, were immediately dispatched to Sir George Savile.

On my return home last night I received a long letter from Sir George, strongly expressing his wishes that the great question may succeed, and his intention to give you his best assistance, if you resolve to move it this winter; but signifying also, that in his opinion, it is improper to bring

bring the business forward, till a powerful support can be depended on; and consequently declining the lead, unless he can be satisfied in that respect. As this difficulty relates only to the degree of support which may be expected, I hope it will be got over; in a few days I shall probably have an opportunity to converse upon the subject with Sir George and Mr. Hartley, at this place, and shall certainly communicate the result to your Lordship. I would now transmit a copy of Sir George's letter, if for the reason above, I did not wish to consider it as not containing his final determination.— But if he shall then positively decline taking the lead, I shall not fail to send you the whole.

I am, my Dear Lord, with true regard,

Your most faithful servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Paper V.

Letter from Viscount MAHON to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

HARLEY-STREET, October 23d, 1780.

My Dear Sir,

I Send you herewith the unanimous Resolutions of our Kentish Committee, which I trust will meet with your approbation, and with that of your respectable Committee of the County of York, to whom, I beg you will have the goodness to present those Resolves,

Our Committee wish to prevent, as much as possible, *unnecessary procrastination*; and are at the same time, truly anxious to shew in the most decided and public manner, their high respect for the great and meritorious County of York, and their strong desire of *co-operating* with the valuable Sir George Savile, one of their Representatives in Parliament, in the promoting of the important and necessary object of equalizing and purifying the Representation, by adding to the House of Commons, at least one hundred County Members,

I have the honour to be,

With the highest esteem, and sincerest respect,

My Dear Sir, your most faithful,

And affectionate humble servant,

MAHON, Chairman,

P. S.

P. S. I send you inclosed a copy of my Letter to Lord Rockingham. I have wrote many Letters to the like effect, to other persons.

We shall certainly be very strong in this new Parliament.

For God's sake, my Dear Sir, let us be well aware of *even seeming* to concede any further, either in respect of matter, manner, or time. We shall lose *all* by *procrastination*, for to use the late Earl of Chatham's expression on this subject; *We have taken possession of strong ground, let who will decline to follow us.* Nothing but *firmness* can procure us the *united support* of opposition.

Paper VI.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Viscount MAHON.

BURTON-HALL, October 27th, 1780.

My Dear Lord,

NOTHING could have given me more satisfaction than your packet of the 23d of October, inclosing copies of the Resolutions of your very respectable Committee, and your Lordship's

Lordship's letter to Lord Rockingham, &c. because nothing could be better timed than they are, or better adapted to conciliate and unite all real friends of the public in the common cause; or if they fail to produce that desirable effect, they will teach us at least to discriminate on good grounds, the Patriot from the mere Partizan, who would assume the name. I hope the Resolutions may also have due weight with Sir George Savile, and induce him to accept the honourable task of moving our great question. When this very material point is settled, when Sir George agrees to move, and your Lordship to support him, I shall be satisfied the fate of our Constitution is committed into the best and safest hands which this Country affords.

I transmit to your Lordship a copy of Sir George Savile's letter; because, instead of having seen him here some days ago, I find it is still uncertain when he will come, and I dare say you wish to see his reasoning at full length. I also inclose my letter to Sir George Savile, which accompanied the copy of our correspondence, on the proposed introduction of our Bill, by Sir George Savile.

Believe me ever, my Dear Lord,

Your faithful and affectionate humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

NUMBER XXV.

Paper I.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir G. SAVILE.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, April 29th, 1783.

Dear Sir,

IT was with extreme concern I understood from Mr. Mason a few weeks ago, that your old disorder had returned with violence; and though I had the satisfaction since that, to hear you was got much better, yet it is impossible that any of your friends, who know how frequent your relapses have been, can avoid feeling the greatest anxiety and apprehension, at your design of coming up to attend the House on the 7th of May. It is the dread of all who have any regard for you, that you may come, and that the heat of a most crowded House, and your zeal and anxiety on a most important Debate, may too probably exceed your strength.—Allow me therefore, my Dear Sir, in the name of several of your friends and at the particular request of some whom you greatly regard, to
intreat

intreat you will lay aside the thought of being present at that debate. Ever since I heard of your late relapse, I blamed myself for not having written in stronger terms to Mr. Foljambe, in my letter from Wansford, to dissuade you from making the attempt. These were my sentiments before I had conversed with any of your friends here ; but when I found their apprehensions for your safety were the same as mine, and Sir Cecil Wray particularly wished me to write, I could not hesitate any longer. Very possibly you may be the less inclined to comply with our intreaties, because you may think they are the suggestions of private friendship, in opposition to what the public good may be thought to require. Far from it ; on this occasion, I am persuaded they are agreed. Your approbation of the measure is well known ; but whether you attend or not, the question it is universally believed will be lost. In these circumstances can the public good require you should hazard your life to add your vote to a minority, even on such a question as this ? I cannot think it. Besides the affairs of this Country are in a forced unnatural situation ; they cannot long continue in it ; at least, it seems not unreasonable to apprehend danger is making near approaches to us. In a public view, therefore, it may be of the greatest consequence that Sir G. Savile, though unable to attend Parliament, is yet alive and able to give his assistance

assistance on any great emergency by his advice, and the influence of his character and experience. It may prevent great mischiefs; and even if what I allude to, should not befall the Country, his counsel may be of almost equal importance, whenever an improvement of the mode of Representation is really about to take place. And as for the opinion of your Constituents, believe me, that is too well fixed to require such hazardous proofs as these, of your regard for the Constitution, or your zeal to exert yourself to the utmost of your power, in promoting a question they have at heart. They know all this already as well as it can be known. And if for want of my representing this to you fully and in proper time, they should have the misfortune to lose you, I should not be forgiven by them, nor should I ever forgive myself.

I hope you will not take the trouble to answer this letter; but that Mr. Foljambe will, and that I shall have the pleasure of hearing from him before the 7th of May, that I have been fortunate enough to prevail with you to stay at Rufford.

Believe me ever, Dear Sir,

With most sincere regard, truly your's,

C. WYVILL.

Paper II.

Neither this letter nor any other intreaties of his Friends and dearest Relations, could alter Sir G. Savile's resolution to attend Parliament on the 7th of May. He made an effort to deliver his last Speech in support of Mr. Pitt's Motion, that day, for a Reform in
the

Paper II.

Application by Sir CECIL WRAY, &c. to Sir G. SAVILE, requesting him not to resign his Seat in Parliament; with Sir G. SAVILE's answer annexed.

November 20, 1783.

MR. Hammond and Mr. D. Hartley having suggested to Sir Cecil Wray, that Sir George Savile (who had signified his intention to vacate his seat for the County of York) might perhaps be persuaded to change his opinion, if applied to by some Gentleman of the County. Messrs. Duncombe, Peirse, &c. approved the suggestion, and the following letter was signed and given by Sir Cecil to Sir George Savile, then ill at Brompton.

the Representation; but his frame enfeebled by sickness, was unable to bear that exertion; he fainted in the middle of his Speech, and though timely assistance brought him to life, he grew weaker daily, and at last sunk under the effects of this blow, near the end of the year 1783.

In the closing scene of Sir G. Savile's life, and in that of Lord Chatham, not long before, the circumstances were remarkably coincident. Sir G. Savile, the acutest Reasoner, the most enlightened Legislator, the most accomplished Patriot fell, in a virtuous effort in Parliament to renovate the British Constitution:—The death of Lord Chatham, the greatest Orator and Statesman of this Country, was the consequence of a similar exertion to prevent the dismemberment of the British Empire: In the agitation of a Debate on that Question, he also fainted, and died in a few days.

* Letter to Sir G. SAVILE by several Members of
Parliament of the County of York.

DEsirous to give to Sir George Savile every
testimony of regard and gratitude for his
services, we do most earnestly intreat Sir George
still to continue himself to us, in the Character
of our Representative.

It is needless to say how much we esteem him
in that Character. We cannot reconcile our-
selves to the idea of breaking through a Con-
nection which is so dear to us. Ourselves and
others, Members of Parliament, will willingly
take a part in the private business of the
County, in which from a just regard to his in-
valuable life, we wish Sir George not to in-
terfere.

Muncaster,
W. Wilberforce,
Cecil Wray,
Frederick Robinson,

John Cavendish,
Arundell Gallway,
Thomas Gascoigne,
Henry Peirse.

On calling at Brompton some days after, Sir
George Savile told Sir Cecil Wray, that he had
scrawled a letter in answer, but had not sent it,
as he could not make it so perfect as he could

* N. B. Mr. Burke, refused to Sign it.

with.

with.—Sir George, therefore, desired Sir Cecil to make his personal compliments to the Gentlemen who had signed the letter. And at the same time gave Sir Cecil the following Paper.

Note by Sir G. SAVILE in answer to the Yorkshire Members of Parliament.

I Have had two or three baddish days, and am quite unable to write.—I can but make sad work of it now; can you contrive for me, my Dear Sir, to assure the Gentlemen who have signed the Paper, how sincerely I am impressed with both the sense of their kindness and the honour of their testimony.

I do assure you, if it was possible for me to foresee a chance of sufficient ground to change my intention, that Paper would not have failed of almost forcing my compliance, were there a possible prospect of doing or almost seeming to do, in almost any sense, even a part only of the duties of the office, though even to the hurt of my health. I might through your flattery be induced to suppose it a duty to run the risk for the good you tell me I might contribute to; or, if I could see a rational prospect of my growing better able to bustle a little, and so becoming able to make again a little running, without being again immediately demolished, in this case too,

I might perhaps be induced to try. Neither of these are the case, I lose the chance equally by breaking my neck over the next hedge, as by taking my tired horse home in time.

The exceeding kind suggestion of lightening my task of Provincial Business, I do not know how to acknowledge as I should do.—Pray once more let me beg of you to do it for me as well as you can.

Obtainingly communicated by Sir Cecil Wray, the worthy Friend of Sir George Savile.

Paper III.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to Sir R. D. HILD-
YARD, High-Sheriff of Yorkshire.

BROMPTON, November 29th, 1781.

Sir,

BY my Printed Address to the County (which I hope has not failed to be transmitted to you as was directed, as early as could be) you would be apprised of my intention of vacating my Seat. Not knowing at that time, when the County Courts would fall, I could not fix the time, so as to allow a proper interval (which

I very

I very much wished) between the moving of the Writ and the Election; for the County to take such measures as might seem most proper regarding the choice of their Representative.

The next County Court will I find fall on the 17th, on which day the Election might indeed be, if the Writ comes to your hands by the 11th, yet, as it may probably seem a very desirable measure to have some opportunity through your favour, of feeling the sense of the County at a previous Meeting; and as at any rate too great a precipitancy is the fault, of all others, to be avoided; I should wish not to have the Writ moved, so as to come to your hands till after the 11th. In that case, by notice at the County Court on the 17th, you may appoint the Election, on any day you shall judge best, from ten to sixteen days after. In the mean-time, I flatter myself, that on this exposition of my intentions, which I now take the liberty of troubling you with, you will not feel any objection to the procuring a Meeting of the County (if you think that measure eligible in other respects) previous to the Election, the *matter itself* being out of question; and the *legal form* of the Writ being come to your hands, not appearing necessary to a *previous Meeting*, which is not (like the Election) a formal proceeding, or ruled by legal restrictions.

My anxious desire to act so as to consult as much as in me lies, both the peace and the satisf-

faction of those to whom I have so many and great obligations, makes me promise myself I shall obtain your excuse for this trouble.

Being much out of order, I must entreat you to excuse my sending you such a blotted letter.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

With great respect,

Your most obedient, and most humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Paper IV.

Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to Sir R. D. HILDYARD.

(Supposed to be dated on or near Dec. 1781.)

Sir,

I Have to acknowledge the honour of your letter, which indeed I should have done sooner, if the unequal and uncertain state of my health from day to day, had not almost obliged me to delay it.—I hope, and indeed I have some confidence, that the appointment of a Meeting may be the means of producing both *Peace* and *Satisfaction* to the County in their next choice. The last indeed, the essential circumstance; but the former certainly likewise a very desirable one.

Concluding that Mr. Duncombe, to whom I had till the other day the honour to be Colleague,

gue, will be at the Meeting; I have taken the liberty of troubling him so far as to beg he would express to the Meeting, how very happy I shall be in seizing the last public opportunity I may have of expressing my respect and gratitude, by adding all the little support an individual such as myself can give, to the Person who shall be fortunate enough to be honoured with the approbation of this public Meeting.— I am sure this is the least, as it is the last return I can make for the most honourable confidence, they have so long reposed in me.

If any unforeseen accident should prevent Mr. Duncombe from being there, shall I beg of you, Sir, to put into some Friend's hands for me the above declaration, which I wish very much not to be omitted. Indeed I do not see any impropriety in its coming from the Chair, in which you will preside at that Meeting, yet it was a liberty I was unwilling to take without your previous knowledge of it.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

With great respect,

Your most obedient, most humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

I must beg you to accept my apology for employing another hand to write the above, it being rather troublesome to me.

G. SAVILE.

Paper V.

Speech of Sir R. D. HILDYARD at a Meeting of the County of York, on the 17th day of December, 1783; announcing the Resignation of Sir G. SAVILE, as their Representative, and moving thanks to him for his eminent Services.

UPON the first circulation of Sir George Savile's Address, signifying his intention of resigning his seat, I was applied to by a number of respectable Gentlemen to call a County Meeting, for the purpose of nominating his successor. I thought it my duty to assent to a request, which I had every reason to believe would meet with the approbation of the County at large, and my advertisement for that purpose should have appeared immediately after Sir George's Address had been published in the papers, had I not understood that there were some fresh hopes of inducing him to retain his seat, through the application to him of the Yorkshire Gentlemen who were at that time in town. Till an answer was given, and till I found from himself, that it was his unalterable resolution to resign; I conceived there might be a degree of indelicacy in providing against an event, we had all so much reason to wish might not take place. For, I am sure you will all join with me in lamenting the occasion of our Meeting this day, and in regretting the loss of

of a Representative, who signalized himself during a long political career, by his regard for the Constitution, his zeal for the true interests of the State, his assiduity, his vigilance, his integrity, his independence, and whose whole line of Parliamentary conduct, has seldom been equalled, I will venture to say never surpassed.— With sufficient pretensions to the highest honours his Country could bestow, he preferred remaining in the station in which you had placed him, conceiving that in the execution of that important trust, his abilities might with more advantage be employed to the public service.

But highly as he regarded this situation, he thought it incompatible with his character to hold it longer than he was able to perform the duties annexed to it, and as the last and best testimony of which he is now able to give you of his regard, he has resigned the trust into the hands by which it was delegated; preferring your interest to every private and partial consideration.

To such a character I trust you will not deny your praise, to such obligations I trust you will not refuse your thanks.

I therefore move, That the warmest acknowledgements of this Meeting be offered to Sir George Savile, &c.

NUMBER XXVI.

At the request of the Meeting, Sir R. D. Hildyard communicated as expeditiously as possible their Vote of Thanks to Sir G. Savile;

NUMBER XXVI.

Paper I.

Resolution proposed by the Rev. C. WYVILLE to the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 9th of May, 1781, but rejected by the Committee; with a proposed Modification of the Resolution annexed.

Resolved,

THAT whereas misapprehensions have arisen relative to the intentions of those who have proposed a Constitutional Reform in the Representation of this County, by the addition of at least one hundred County Members to be chosen in a due proportion in the different Counties of the kingdom; we think if necessary to declare our opinion, that after the aforesaid one hundred County Members are added to the House of Commons, those Persons who are proprietors

Savile; and also their nomination of F. F. Foljambe, Esq; as a proper person to Represent the County of York in Parliament in the place of his uncle Sir G. Savile, Bart.—The communication found him languishing, and at the point of death; at that affecting moment he was soothed by these testimonies of the veneration, the gratitude, and sympathising affection of his Constituents. He died soon after in the arms of his faithful friend David Hartley, Esq; having first uttered with faint and feeble voice, these memorable words, "I have finished, and I have finished well!"

prietors of Boroughs, and who might be willing to consent to the reduction of Boroughs, shall receive a full and adequate compensation for their respective interests therein.

And that it should moreover be optional in the Proprietors of Boroughs, either to accept of the tendered compensation or to retain their present rights.

Modification of the foregoing Resolution to which

** it is probable that the Yorkshire Committee would assent, if it were understood, that such a Declaration on their part would induce the great Body who form the Minority in Parliament, to adopt their Association.*

1st Resolved,

THAT Parliament hath an unquestionable right to inquire into and correct all abuses injurious to the public weal, particularly to Reform the gross inequality in the Representation of the People, by adding to the House of Commons more Representatives of the Counties

* viz: About the middle of the year 1781, when it was proposed to send this Paper to the Marquis of Rockingham. The principle of the Resolution rejected on the 9th of May, 1781, was adopted by the Yorkshire Committee in the year 1782, and acceded to by the County Meeting at York in the same year; but the season of Conciliation was then unfortunately past.

ties and principal Cities, or by reducing the excessive number of Burgesses returned to Parliament by the inferior Boroughs.

2d Resolved, That when the Parliamentary Representation of this Kingdom shall have been improved by the addition of at least one hundred Members, chosen in a due proportion in the different Counties; this Committee far from wishing that Parliament may proceed harshly to exercise its inherent right, to correct the still remaining inequality by a compulsive disfranchisement of the inferior Boroughs, doth trust that an adequate reduction of Boroughs may take place, on terms of purchase and full satisfaction offered by Parliament to the Persons interested therein, and freely accepted by them.

The Resolution proposed on the 9th of May, 1781, was rejected by the Yorkshire Committee, chiefly on account of the uncertainty whether such a measure, if adopted by the Committee, would produce the wished for union. This suggested the idea that a conciliatory Overture on that ground might be made by letter; and a considerable number of the Committee having been privately consulted on the subject, some objections of a constitutional nature, which had been suggested on the 9th of May, were again urged in opposition to the measure; to obviate which the subsequent modification was prepared. But it being the opinion of most of the Gentlemen consulted, that the overture in any shape at that time would not be well received, it was found to be advisable not to send the Letter and the corrected Resolutions which had been drawn up, with a view to effect an union of the Nobles and the Committee of Yorkshire on the principles of the Association.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Letter proposed to be sent with the preceding Propositions by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM.

BURTON-HALL, Jan^y 18th, 1781.

My Lord,

I Have the honour to inclose for your Lordship's perusal, an account of the proceedings at the late General Meeting of Deputies; and also a copy of the Resolutions of the Yorkshire Committee of Association, on the 9th and 10th of May last, including the report of their Deputies.

The annexed list of Gentlemen present at that Meeting of the Committee is numerous, and respectable in character and weight of property; and I am happy to assure your Lordship, their determination to persevere in opposition to the present corrupt system of Government is firm and unanimous. To the terms of their Association they mean to adhere with integrity and resolution; because they are clearly convinced that if every other political Reform were obtained, without a due correction of abuses in the Representation and duration of Parliaments, no solid and permanent security to the Constitution would be established; and because,

because, if possible, they are still more clearly convinced, that no considerable body of the People can ever be induced to unite in a steady defence of our common liberties, on any other ground than that, of a Reformation of Parliament.

But when I do the Yorkshire Gentlemen the justice to represent them to your Lordship, as firmly resolved to support that effectual plan of Parliamentary Reformation, which is the object of their Association; I hope this firm resolution will not be thought to indicate an unconciliating or impracticable disposition. They see too plainly the danger to which the Constitution is exposed, from the great and growing power of the Crown, not to wish most anxiously that a more perfect union might take place between the body of the People, and those honoured Persons in each House of Parliament, who have endeavoured, on the ground of oeconomy only, to check the growth of that alarming power.— With this conciliatory view, the enclosed proposition respecting the disfranchisement of Boroughs, *by purchase only, at the option of the Proprietors*, was offered to the consideration of the Yorkshire Committee on the 9th of May; and although I have not the satisfaction to say, the Motion was agreed to; yet if your Lordship, and that respectable body of men who usually co-operate with you in Parliament, could approve the plan of Parliamentary Reformation adopted by this County, *provided that proposition*
were

were recommended by the Committee, and admitted at a General County Meeting, as an additional article of the Association ; in that case, I am persuaded, the difficulties which in some measure have impeded that desirable union, would soon be surmounted. In conformity with such a Resolution, generally agreed to, an adequate number of the little, venal, Cornish Boroughs, the Cinque Ports, and other Boroughs of similar description, might be abolished, at an expence, which in comparison with the immense benefit resulting from the change, would be moderate indeed.— And thus, the Cities and the sounder part of the Boroughs, co-operating with the augmented Representation of the Counties, under a triennial duration of Parliament, would form an effectual barrier against the ambition of the Crown.

To restore a sinking Constitution must ever be a work of great difficulty, as well as high importance. But in this Country, whatever shape oppression may assume ; whether it injure the Public under the forms of the Constitution, or in direct violation of them ; means of opposition, consistent with peace and regularity, have been wisely provided by the Laws, for the protection of Liberty. And by the resolute use of those safe, but efficacious means, national grievances may yet be redressed, and Parliament may be restored, in some degree, to the purity of its original institution.

In

In this operation, it is plain, success cannot reasonably be expected but from a general union of independent men in Parliament, with the body of the People. The progress which has been made on the part of the People, towards effecting that necessary Coalition, has not been inconsiderable. In different parts of the kingdom, multitudes of our fellow-subjects have entered into legal Associations, still subsisting in vigour, though not in that extent and generality which can afford a prospect of immediate success. In the present gloomy appearance of public affairs, it is the expectation of a timely support in Parliament, which still animates those laudable Combinations. But if an absolute refusal, or a too tedious delay of that support, should dispirit the People, despondence would unavoidably produce the dissolution of their Committees. And although Yorkshire might be perhaps the last County which would despair of the Public weal; yet, when every other Association had abandoned the struggle, even Yorkshire would soon be compelled to yield, and give up the unequal contest. After this extinction of the Committees, every hope to revive a popular opposition to the Crown, on legal grounds would be irrecoverably lost.—For then, either the nation would sink into a general dejection of mind, and passively submit to every future encroachment on their rights and liberties: or, if this absolute submission to
despotic

despotic Power should not be the immediate consequence, the ancient English spirit, finding the legal and pacific mode of resistance to be of no avail, would burst out and rashly pass beyond the bounds of Order and Law. But an unsuccessful attempt to save the Constitution by violent and irregular means, would only aggravate that ruin which it might struggle to avert; and forcible opposition, even when the first object of the dispute may have been successfully pursued, through many dangers and much public calamity, would not be unattended with hazard to the Constitution; as this nation has already experienced. Such probably would be the consequences of a dissolution of the County Associations; and from the alternative which they present, every Friend to Peace and good Order, every Friend to public Liberty, and the happiness of his Fellow-Citizens must wish the deliverance of his Country.

In the popular apprehension, the power of the Crown is evidently drawing near to that situation of impregnable strength, where it must ever be assailed in vain. How soon it may attain that commanding post, it is impossible to determine—much sooner perhaps than some of our Countrymen may imagine. In circumstances of such imminent peril, men of Parliamentary experience may have wished that a less extensive Plan of Reformation had been adopted by the People; and they may have regretted, that a

more cautious policy did not determine the Affociations to confine their efforts to the prosecution of palliative measures. But still they agree with the People in their apprehensions of danger ; and since they have beheld a House of Commons, elected when a national complaint had just been preferred to Parliament, against the waste of public money, and the excessive influence of the Crown, encouraging the growth of that influence, by the unexampled prodigality of their grants, and rejecting every measure proposed for its restraint, notwithstanding the promise of that House in a preceding Session, to provide an immediate and effectual redress of the abuses complained of; the incurable corruption of that Assembly in its present state, is now more manifestly proved ; and consequently a substantial Reform of Parliament may now appear to them more evidently necessary : And since a divided opposition to the Crown cannot accomplish a due reduction of its alarming power ; their junction with the People on that ground which they have already occupied, and from which they cannot depart without a general dispersion, seems now to be the only measure of legal opposition, which can prevent the gradual or sudden introduction of despotic Power.

For what I have now taken the liberty to suggest, I profess I have no authority from the Committee of Yorkshire. Your Lordship will

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be pleased to consider all I have here said, as proceeding from the zeal of a very private Individual. But if that Individual is not mistaken in his observations on the temper and principles of the Yorkshire Gentlemen, they will gladly concur in this or any other more proper expedient, by which a General Coalition of the real Friends of their Country may be effected on the basis of their Association.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord, with high respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper III.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of EFFINGHAM.

BURTON-HALL, July 12, 1781.

My Lord,

WHEN your Lordship and Mr. Tooker opposed the Proposition respecting the optional disfranchisement of Boroughs, I understood your objection to go not against the principle of the Motion as an Overture or ground of Conciliation, between the Nobility

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and

and the People ; but against the expediency of such a public Declaration, before it was in some measure ascertained, whether it would produce the desired effect of a General Coalition. And it seemed to be your Lordship's opinion in particular that if on a private application it was found the Nobles would accept that Resolution, as a sufficient inducement for their accession to the Association, on those terms it would be right and prudent in the Committee to adopt it.

With this view I have lately taken some pains to draw up a letter of a conciliatory nature, to be sent to Lord Rockingham and the Noblemen connected with him, if your Lordship and some other Gentlemen of the Committee shall encourage me to proceed by your approbation of the idea.

I propose to say, that the Committee is firmly resolved to adhere to the Association, but at the same time anxious for a more perfect union with the Nobles who have supported the Economical Petition. And if that desirable union could be effected, provided the Committee would agree to a Resolution, declaring their opinion that every future disfranchisement of Boroughs should be optional, on terms of purchase agreeable to the Proprietors ; I am persuaded the Committee might be induced to adopt that Proposition. At the same time declaring what I venture to suggest on this subject, is without authority, and only the private opinion of a single Member of the Committee.

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This is the outline of my letter ; and if it is honoured with your Lordship's approbation, that would go far in determining me to make the experiment ; I foresee no harm likely to result from it, while on the contrary it may do much good. If in consequence of such an overture, we should obtain the assistance of the Nobles, we should probably carry a measure of great benefit to the Public, without the hazards of a Civil War. If the Nobles really do not mean to join us, in the attempt to Reform Parliament on the terms of the Association, it will be our advantage to know it. The expedient is perfectly consistent with our professed principles ; and if it should fail to produce the desired concurrence, I do not believe the overture, if known, would do the Committee or their cause any disservice in the opinion of the Public.

In a transaction of this kind, secrecy is so obviously necessary, that I need not recommend caution in communicating the idea. But I should be happy, my Lord, if you would favour me with your own opinion and advice ; and also with that of any confidential Friend with whom you may converse upon the subject.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

With the highest respect and regard,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

The Earl of EFFINGHAM.

Paper IV.

*Letter from the Earl of EFFINGHAM to the Rev.
C. WYVILL.*

GRANGE, July 22d, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I Should have answered your Letter sooner but that my time has been taken up, (it being our Quarter Sessions) so that I had not leisure to give the subject the reflection I thought it required; and would not venture to converse with any body at present but Mr. Tooker, and no further than as to the propriety of the Plan in General, as it was mentioned at York.

My objection at York was principally confined to such a *Public Declaration* as was the then subject of discourse; but I believe, I even then threw out (though it was not the matter directly before us) my opinion concerning Proprietary Boroughs, that they were not (Constitutionally speaking) a thing that could exist, and though it is too true, that such things do exist, yet they are not the worst evils we endure, because being generally in the hands of Persons of large Landed Property, they are more likely to be Represented by Persons of that description or their Relations, than the Sea Port, and open Boroughs are, where either influence or corruption,

ruption, must generally give a dead weight against the People. Now it appears to me that an optional Disfranchisement would be found to affect none but those Boroughs where the People have nearly an equal chance with the Court. And all the dead weight of the Court, would be left untouched.

For these reasons, if Lord Mahon's Propositions are to be adopted at all, they should be adopted entirely without distinction; and satisfaction made as a free gift of the Public for a *supposed* right, which had been long indeed held, but had never been a legal Tenure.

Indeed I see so many difficulties in bringing about any agreement with so many Persons who are interested in coming to none at all, that I should be very doubtful of the possibility of its being done within the time necessary. I should myself think it more for the public advantage that all Boroughs were left in *statu quo*—provided our Proposition was adopted of County Members; and to prevent disputes about the proportioning them, I would shorten the question by proposing to double the present number for each County.

These, Sir, are my ideas on the subject at large. I would certainly do much to bring about a *sincere Conciliation*, but I should think it ought never to be sought by the Committee as a body, by such a step as declaring an unconstitutional Doctrine; as by so doing they would probably

incur the charge of not having been true to their trust, which would effectually put them in the state their opponents desire.

At the same time I cannot deny that part of your supposition wherein you mention the possibility of good arising from any *Individual*, trying what kind of terms the Persons you describe would wish to have, and whether any thing we *ought* to do, would obtain their *sincere* co-operation; but I think the Association as a body must not be committed even in the most distant appearance, till Proposals are made that they can with Justice to their Country approve.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great truth and regard,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

EFFINGHAM.

P. S. Since writing the above I have seen Mr. Wilkinfon and Mr. Shore, who both confirm the opinion above, as to the great impropriety of any Proposal from, or Resolution in the Committee,

Paper V.

*Paper V.**Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

ALNWICK, July 22d, 1781.

Dear Sir,

THE dispersed state of the Regiment (in no less than fourteen places, and at a considerable distance) occasions my leading a Tartarian kind of a life, and naturally diverts a good part of my time as well as my attention from other matters, although of more serious consequence. The subject of your last favour is not of a kind to be thought lightly of, or answered hastily, and it makes me still more cautious in venturing an opinion on the subject, when I observe that you make so much to depend upon it; even your determination whether to send it or no. I am sure I could hardly ever forgive myself, if any mistake in my judgment were to be the means of preventing a Treaty that might promote a Union, without which, I am morally certain no good can be done. I therefore beg that although I may be inclined (perhaps too much) to despond, you will not suffer my opinion alone, and still less against that of others, to prevent your proceeding with an attempt which even according to my fears cannot be very pernicious; since the less chance there is
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of matters coming about of themselves, the less objection there is to try any remedy, which does but carry the face of a fair attempt. You will remember that the objections I started were rather to the matter itself, than to the manner of treating it; and indeed I believe the latter will not often be the weak part when you set your pen to any subject. The objections arose from the nature of the thing, the *actual* circumstances of the case, and the jealousies which I apprehend *already* to have been conceived, and *perhaps conceived not without reason*, and which I much fear it is too late to remedy by merely softening the terms of a Proposition, or even, *seeming* by a change of phrase to have varied the object. I do not mean to enter at all into the merits of the argument, or the solidity of the distinction between the *venal* and the *property* Boroughs. The decision of that question is not necessary to the present argument. I rather go on a question of fact. The two species *have* been put together by the popular Leaders; nay the greater stress *has* been laid on the *absurdity* of such a sham Representation as the latter, rather than on the *corruption* of the former, or if this be not so, it is just as bad;—it has been conceived to be so. To cure this jealousy, it was thought necessary to explain that you wanted by no means to *force* Boroughs without consent and purchase;—*force* them?—from *whom?*
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without consent?—without whose consent? The very Treaty you see, the very Explanation, the very Apology, and softening down of the matter still implying, nay, confirming the idea of proprietorship: because although Lord Mahon has a plan to eat away the corrupt Boroughs in the same way, yet it is little known or talked of, and certainly not enough so to make the idea of purchasing Boroughs apply at first sight, in the general acceptation to open venal Boroughs, still less to Ministerial ones. I have marked in the last page the words, perhaps not without reason: for the honest truth I think is, that the Property Boroughs were in reality the object which most drew the attention, and whose gross absurdity most shocked the common sense of the majority of those who thought on the subject; and the rather as it went in unison with a jealousy of the Aristocracy or Nobility, which ought always indeed to be an object of jealousy where the game is between it and the People, and sometimes too when the Crown makes a third at the Play. I lap up my thoughts in as few words as I can; the conversation we have already had, being such as I think will enable you to decypher what I write.

I think you will find that even in the draught of the letter you have sent me, which certainly has smoothed and filed down every sharp corner and roughness *as much as possible*, there is
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still in the 4th paragraph, a sort of inconsistency which unavoidably exposes the weak place, for it begins "with a conciliatory View and to propose the Disfranchisement of Boroughs, at the *option of the Proprietors, &c.*" and it ends with "the Abolition of *venal* Cornish Boroughs, "Cinque Ports, and others of like Description." Now, who are the Proprietors of the Cinque Ports and of venal Boroughs, and can any one *bona fide* say, one is meaning those Boroughs when one promises the Nobles that one will not take *their* properties without their consent. There is no masking this. My Proposition is shortly this, The majority of the Friends to Liberty have been certainly more struck with the *Absurdity* of *Property* Boroughs and aristocratical Representation, than with the *venality* of the *corrupt* ones. They have sufficiently intimated, or (which is the same thing) have been understood to have intimated, that those Boroughs are their object: They soon perceive it impossible to be obtained without the goodwill of those whose ill-will they have excited. They therefore explain to them, that they only meant the *venal* Boroughs; *for buying up which they ask their consent, and this because they won't violate their property.* What! ask the Proprietors of *one thing* leave to destroy *another*, and whose Abolition too will rather increase their (comparative) influence,

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The same paragraph makes mention of the Proposition having been not agreed to on the 9th of May. But as the objection which arises from this seems absolutely to rest with you, and on the ground of prudence, whether to hazard a Letter (as a private one) on such a delicate subject, and in those circumstances, I do not know any thing I can suggest in addition to what passed at your House, and indeed the question in this respect may be altered by the encouragement you have received in a way and to a degree, of which you alone can be the judge.

With regard to the sending it only to Lord Rockingham, I think you misunderstood me, or I misexpressed myself, or spoke hastily. I certainly do not recollect that I objected to a *public* Application (and more especially on the ground of a risk of a disavowal) and a Circular Letter, to *some Nobles* I looked upon as *public*, because it seemed to me to be odds, but *some one* for *some reason* would let it transpire. But if your Application be made to *any one*, surely it should be by some *confidential and friendly* Communication, and if there be not subsisting the means of *such* an intercourse, I believe I need not point out how much that circumstance lessens the chance of a result worth pursuing.

I see the proposed Letter is dated June 18th. I think we mentioned the little indelicacy that appeared

appeared in the delay of the Communication.—
I forget exactly how that part of our conversation ended, and it is a matter of a smaller consideration.

I believe, my Dear Sir, I have now mentioned the chief part at least of what materially relates to the business in Question. I must repeat my Apology for not doing it sooner, I think the delay will be of no ill-consequence. Indeed I fear, there is yet time before us to deliberate before any effectual remedy suggests itself to a lingering, but very surely fatal distemper.

I am much obliged to you for your kind wishes for my health; I think it goes on pretty well. Pray return my best thanks and compliments likewise to Mrs. Wyvill.

Dear Sir, with great regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

G. SAVILE.

Rev. Mr. WYVILL.

Paper VI.

Paper VI.

Letter from Viscount MAHON to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

CHEVENING, July 24th, 1781.

My Dear Sir,

YOUR letters which I have just received, give me the greatest pleasure, in as much as I am truly happy to find that the *principle* of the Motion was not disapproved of by your respectable Committee, but only the *expediency* of resolving it, till it was known whether or no it would be attended with success. In that I am far from disagreeing with your Committee, although I might perhaps be of opinion, that there would have been no impropriety in making the attempt for a reason you suggested yourself, I mean the knowing for certain upon what ground *they* stand. I have only one thing to recommend, and that I take the liberty to recommend very particularly, and that is, to express in your *letters* (which I am happy you intend to write) that the Compensation should be *perfectly optional*; and that it is meant, that those Proprietors of Boroughs, who do not desire to part with their Boroughs for any compensation should compleatly retain their present Rights. It is upon *this* Proposition being
fully

fully understood, that depends the whole prospect of success.

Would it not be proper to write (amongst others) to the Duke of Rutland, to the Duke of Richmond, to Mr. Thomas Pitt, and Sir James Lowther.—I have seen Mr. David Hartley, and have also conversed with Mr. William Pitt, on the subject of our idea, of an *optional* Compensation, who both approve it extremely.

I have also seen lately Lord Rockingham, who does *not* yet seem to meet us. He still is of opinion that the Country at large does *not care* for *these* kinds of objects.

It appears to me, that if Sir George Savile approves of your excellent ideas, it would be also right with his permission, to express *his approbation* of the Plan of CONSTITUTIONAL UNION, in your intended Letters. It would add great weight.

Believe me ever, my Dear Sir,

With the highest respect,

Your most faithful and affectionate,
MAHON.

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

Letter from Earl STANHOPE to the Rev. C.
WYVILL.

MANFIELD-STREET, May 13th, 1793.

Dear Sir,

I AM happy to hear by your Letter that we are soon to have from you an interesting collection of Papers, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. I consent to your publishing (according to your desire) my two Letters to you; the first, dated October the 23d, 1780, and the second, dated July the 24th, 1781.

If *we* (I mean *we* the Public) have not hitherto succeeded better in our attempts to obtain a Reform of Parliament, I ascribe it to *this cause*; namely, that the *Public at large* have not done justice to themselves upon that subject. For, they have in general neglected to express by Resolutions, or by Petitions to the House of Commons, their sense in favour of that important measure. And you see, by my Letter to you of July 24th, 1781, that Lord Rockingham, declined to come into the measure, from his belief that the Country at large did "*not care for these kinds of objects.*"

The political *Rights* of the Nation are UNALIENABLE, sacred, and eternal, and never can

be forfeited or lost by disuser, or forbearance.—
 When, therefore, I approved of the Proposition for an *optional* Compensation to be given to the Borough-Holders, I approved of it upon *this* principle; viz. *not* as conceiving that the present Borough-Holders have (strictly speaking) any just claim to any such compensation from the Nation; but, because I considered it as a mere question about the *sum of money only*, which it might be adviseable for the Nation to pay for that purpose; rather than to lose, or even delay, the attaining of a Parliamentary Reform. It was an admirable observation of the late most excellent and respectable Sir George Savile, in speaking of the *policy* and *expediency* of giving to the Borough-Holders a sum of money, in order to obtain that most important object: “*The expence of six weeks of the American War*” (said he) “*would be sufficient to purify our Constitution.*” And happy, I am sure it would have been if that useful expence had been incurred *previous* to the American War; for the Nation would have been in *that* case, above ONE HUNDRED MILLIONS sterling in pocket at present.

You will recollect, I am sure, that it was a *part* of the plan, that such portion of the Compensation Money as should *not* be immediately accepted by the Borough-Holders, should be laid out to *accumulate at compound Interest*. The temptation to accept such Compensation Money would, therefore, have daily encreased, and
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would soon have become too strong for those Persons to resist.

Consequently, even the circumstance of the intended Compensation being *optional*, was not a measure that could *defeat* any part of the plan: it was, at worst, a measure of *some delay*; and a delay as to a *part only* of the Boroughs proposed to be abolished by that salutary operation. It was, therefore upon the whole, a mild and prudent measure.

I know extremely well that in times of great *public discontent* (such as existed at the end of the year 1780) many useful things may be obtained, if properly pushed; and *that*, on account of the agitation of the public mind. But in times of tranquillity, happiness, and peace, I see little prospect of any Parliamentary Reform, except upon the plan of *optional Compensation*.

On the other hand, the Borough-Holders would do well to recollect in time, that events *may* happen which may bring about a Parliamentary Reform, even *without* a Compensation.

We are now engaged in a most dangerous and impolitic War with France. What events it may produce I know not. But, should it bring ruin upon this Country, I shall have at least this one consolatory reflection, that I have done every thing in *my* power to prevent it.

Believe me ever, Dear Sir,

With great esteem,

Most faithfully and sincerely yours,

STANHOPE.

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Paper VIII.

Paper VIII.

Letter from DAVID HARTLEY, Esq; to the Rev.
C. WYVILL.

KENSINGTON, July 29th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I DID not receive your favour of the 14th instant, till last night; it went to my Brother at Plymouth. I have my doubts whether the proposed compromise would be accepted by the Nobility, not that it might be thought unreasonable towards them or towards the Proprietors of Boroughs, but that the People of England in general do not seem attached to the Proposition of Reforming Parliament at all, and, therefore, that the whole is premature; in short, that the backwardness of the People has lessened the influential weight of the Committees. Being very desirous to contribute every thing in my power towards union in Yorkshire, I have on several occasions among my Friends stated the proposed compromise as a fair overture of accommodation. I have pleaded for mutual concessions, and I have thought that I have seen many favourable dispositions, but in such touchy and jealous matters, there are many variations of temper and dispositions, therefore, I really cannot tell what judgment

judgment to form. The only piece of advice which occurs to me is this—If the associated Gentlemen of Yorkshire, still continue firmly attached to their Propositions for the Reform of Parliament, notwithstanding *their Deputation, was not accepted by the declared sense of the People of England, &c.* And if the acceptance of the proposed compromise would cordially conciliate the Gentry to the Nobility in Yorkshire, I think these two points should be stated to the Person for whom the letter is intended, because these points cannot fail to have the greatest weight, with a *Yorkshire* Nobleman, and with the other *Yorkshire* Noblemen connected with him.

As to the Proposition of optional Disfranchisement, I entirely agree with you, that all the cancelled Boroughs should have compensations, and I agree, likewise, that all the noble and property Boroughs, though equally deviating from popular Representation, are not so injurious to the Public as venal Ministerial Boroughs; and, therefore, the point of purchase might be more safely left to option. But it should be considered that a Proposition of Conciliation in Yorkshire, cannot bind the People of England, who in some general commotion may go another way, as for instance, they may adopt that Reformation of Representation which was imposed upon Oliver Cromwell, at his inauguration, or the Duke of Richmond's plan, or some other. Some latitude should be pre-

served for events, and therefore, it seems to me that the optional Disfranchisement should be specifically attached to the Proposition of an hundred Knights. These Propositions should be prudently woven together without a seam; and then the parties in question, might concur without jealousy in one common union. This I say to your question of the risque of losing Friends among the body of the People, I do not apprehend much risque in the specific bargain of an hundred Knights *in*, and an hundred rats; optionally purchased *out*. I think I have now said every thing that occurs to me upon the subject of your Letter; I most heartily wish union in *Yorkshire* as the foundation of General Union among all the Friends of the Country. You may be assured that I will contribute every exertion in my power most zealously towards it. I am detained in the neighbourhood of London upon business. I shall hope soon to get into the Country, but the enclosed franks will always reach me with the quickest dispatch.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the greatest regard,

Very faithfully yours.

D. HARTLEY.

Paper IX.

Paper IX.

*Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.
WILLIAM MASON.*

BURTON-HALL, August 14th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I HAD prepared corrected Propositions, considerably changed from that Resolution which was moved on the 9th of May, and which had been originally drawn up by Lord Mahon. The drift of the alterations was to preserve the conciliatory idea of a Compensation for the Boroughs, and yet avoid the imputation of conceding an absolute and indefeazable right in the Boroughs to retain their privileges, however, injurious to the Public. For some Gentlemen objected to the Resolution at first proposed, conceiving that unconstitutional doctrine might be imputed to the Committee, if it were not more clearly expressed, that any compensation was not what in justice the Boroughs have a right to demand, but only what the Committee wish to recommend as a satisfaction to the sufferers, proper to be given on the part of the Public.—Perhaps, at some other time, and in some other way, the *corrected Propositions* may be of use. But your Letter of the 9th, for which you have my sincerest thanks, has fully con-

vinced me it would be imprudent to make any use of them at present, in the way of Negotiation. I therefore determined immediately to write to Sir George Savile; and to inform him I found it unadvisable to make the Overture proposed. And as fast as I am able I mean to communicate the same information, to all the Gentlemen whom I have consulted on the subject.

Ever truly yours,
C. WYVILL.

Paper X.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL
TOOKER, Esq.

HARTLEPOOL, August 21st, 1782.

Dear Sir,

THE proposal for an Overture to the Nobility is now withdrawn. The Letter which was meant to introduce it, had the approbation of Sir George Savile, and although I had no direct reason to think he would undertake to manage the Negotiation, yet I am of opinion he would have recommended the Overture, in
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the character of a mediator and common friend between the parties concerned. But finding the idea not relished by yourself and by some other Friends, for whom I have a very high esteem and regard; I wrote to Sir George Savile a few days ago, to inform him the scheme must be laid aside. I felt the force of your objections; I was indeed very well aware that the proposed transaction was of a delicate nature; that men of ambition would probably wish to break a combination of independent men, whose politics they had not directed nor adopted; and might endeavour to effect their wish by making use of the intended Overture, either to discredit them, or to divide them.— In what manner I meant to guard against the danger of having our offer insidiously turned to our discredit, the Letter itself must shew; of which Mr. Mason has a copy, and will certainly communicate it to you. The other side of the alternative, I had always determined to avoid, by giving up the measure unless it met with general approbation, on a consultation so extensive, as to afford a sufficient insight into the sentiments of the whole Committee. As to the Proposition which was meant to be the ground of the conciliatory Letter, it certainly would have admitted, and indeed had received considerable emendation; but as I saw other difficulties of great moment objected, beside those which might be urged against the Proposition itself,

itself, I did not send the corrected Proposition to you, or Lord Effingham, &c. which I certainly should have done, if I had seen reason to think the application in any other mode or shape, might be made with prudence or a prospect of success; as to the reasons which induced me to bring forward again an idea which had not been approved by the Committee in May, I must also refer you for them, to the Letter of Conciliation, they are there drawn out at full length; and have formed in me this settled opinion, that as we before rightly avoided any connection with the Nobles, in order that we might with more freedom and impartiality agree upon a plan of Parliamentary Reformation; so now the plan is formed and agreed upon, it behoves us to obtain the support of as many powerful men as we can, by honest and consistent means.

If the Nobility had joined us in consequence of the application, the fact would have been, that, although the advance had been made by us, the concession had been made by them; we had not given up our plan and our principles to them, they had given up their scruples, or their affected objections to us. But I am satisfied the time for such an advance is not yet arrived. My opinion of their disposition to join us, has been much changed lately by information from different quarters, of the aversion shewn by several of the leading men among them; and of course,

course, my regret is much diminished at having found it necessary to lay aside a measure which I thought likely to be productive of much public good. However, I am persuaded, if ever a Coalition should take place, it would be on some such terms as the proposed offer of a security against a compulsive disfranchisement of Boroughs. Without that they never will comply; though time and disappointment may induce them to accept those terms.

I am, Dear Sir,

With sincere regard, yours ever,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XI.

*Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of
EFFINGHAM.*

HARTLEPOOL, August 23d, 1781.

My Lord,

IF there had appeared a more general disposition in the Committee to adopt the proposed measure of Conciliation, it would have been necessary to alter the Proposition intended as the ground of the overture, so as to obviate the objections in point of Constitutionality, to which your Lordship thought it liable; and yet

yet to retain what was essential to the offer, as a security to the Proprietors of Boroughs against any harsh and compulsive disfranchisement which might be attempted hereafter by the popular party : This would have been necessary ; and it would have been practicable, I believe, though not without much difficulty. I had tried what I could do towards it, and had thrown the Resolution first proposed into several different shapes, with such corrections as occurred to me. But finding from various quarters, that any application at all to the Nobility would be disliked ; at least, until there appeared a greater probability of their hearty concurrence with us, I would not trouble your Lordship with the farther consideration of a proposal, which in any shape appeared not proper to be made at present.

The proposed Letter had the approbation of Sir George Savile ; and I believe, though without any direct reason to say so, that he would have undertaken to mediate as a common friend to the Nobility and the Association, if the idea of an Overture had been generally approved. I informed him a few days ago, the proposal must be withdrawn.

I am, my Lord, with very sincere respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XII.

*Paper XII.**Letter from Sir G. SAVILE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*NORTHALLERTON, *August 24th, 1781.*

Dear Sir,

I Dare say I must have seemed to you a very negligent Correspondent. The number of letters and the time that some of them have been unanswered, (though I assure you not unnoticed) must look as if I had attended little to a subject which certainly deserves a good deal of thought. The truth is, that on the one hand, my time and thoughts have been too much interrupted lately with journeys and business of a very different cast, and on the other, I did not perceive any thing very material that I would add to what I had stated in my former letter: the obstructions there mentioned being so rooted in the very subject matter itself, and its circumstances, that to remove all minuter and subaltern difficulties by variations in the mode, seems to me as no more than cutting up some bushes and hedges in your approach to a very strong if not impregnable Fortress. I have more and more reason every hour to be confirmed in the opinion, that it is out of the reach of all human possibility to turn the cream sweet again as things now stand. A more decided warfare seems to subsist between different parts
of

of one side, than even between the opposite sides. I can even imagine that things have been made worse too, by reports and tales. A disposition is apparent to construe every thing to the worst sense. In most transactions of life a decided part must be taken, it is commonly a vain hope to trim and scramble for the advantages of both. It is a *trick* to ride upon two horses, and not a practice calculated for the business of this world. You made your option; you, markedly and decidedly avoided all communion with some, because on the whole you judged you should lose more by it. If that (as the cards then lay) was on the whole, the most likely way to succeed, the cause was certainly in a bad way; for it appears very plain to me *now* that, that best way was perfectly hopeless.—What strength or (which is as material) what *disposition* there was in the body described under the name of the People to support Reformation, I cannot precisely judge, nor indeed what ideas they formed of Reformation; but it is plain that whatever that body be it manifests neither knowledge nor strength, nor will to set matters to rights. I am by no means clear that the game would have answered better played another way; I contend only that after such a decided flight, (however prudent) it is impossible to suppose a cordial union can take place; or that matters can be healed or even smoothed decently over by a Negotiation, (which of itself implies enmity) the object of which was
to

to pull down the Aristocracy (so called) as more immediately necessary than to diminish the power of the Crown. I cannot say, therefore, but that on public considerations, I am contented that no farther steps are taken, being very apprehensive that farther irritation only would have ensued. It is a lost game. Another tide must be waited for, natural events, like the flowing water will lift a first rate as easily as a boat; but to be thrusting with poles when the great ship is absolutely dry a ground, is spending strength even to the amusement of the spectators. The comparison might well be carried on. Sometimes the tide coming in overwhelms the vessel before it *rights* or floats her; sometimes it lifts her gently and first on the side she leans to; and, raising her till she is upright, floats her off without the damage of a single plank or rope. Which will happen is impossible to say. I own I have general apprehensions that as nothing but sufferings and disappointments will awaken the People, so nothing but violence will be to be expected from them. In the present acceptation of the term People, it may be hard to define; but, if they are pleased to apply their hands to the work, *the People* will not be an abstract or metaphysical idea.

The latter part of the delay I have used, was owing both to a notion that I might see you at York, and to your last information, of your final determination to cut out this rubber, which made any haste unnecessary. Finding
now

now I cannot very well wait on you in my return, I make a halt to write.

* The three Resolves are I think without objection. I mean in argument. In point of fact they will be *less objected to* for another reason.—I mean the same which protected our *resolves* in the House of Commons, (“That the influence of the Crown is increased, &c.”) viz. that they were declaratory and theoretic, and not going directly to any effect. In general People love well-sounding and constitutional maxims but hang an A— at action. It is pleasanter to read fighting stories, than to fight; I don’t know whether Parliament will be pleased or affronted at the asserting of her rights out of doors. ’Tis according to the humour she’s in; if indeed she minds it at all. For consider that this same Parliament, which you affirm has a *right* to correct herself and turn from the evil way, and to do that which is lawful and right, is the very body, whose power you have been supposed (if not to contest) to rival and contend with. If any thing more occurs to me when I get quiet again at Lumley Castle (as I shall be for a few days) I will write again.—In the mean-time,

Believe me, Dear Sir, with great regard, &c.

G. SAVILE.

* viz. The two Resolutions contained in the latter part of the 1st Paper of this Number, with a 3^d Resolution which had been communicated to Sir G. Savile, but which, forming no necessary part of the Modification proposed, is there omitted.

Paper XIII.

Paper XIII.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to JOHN
DUNNING, Esq.

HARTLEPOOL—near Stockton, August 28th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I Should have much more pleasure in communicating, as you certainly would have in receiving, the following account of a lately projected Overture of Conciliation between the Nobility and the Committee of Yorkshire; if I could close it with any favourable result. But in the course of this transaction it has appeared, that the time for a General Coalition has not yet arrived.—The ground of the Overture was proposed to be a Declaration by the Committee, that in case any future disfranchisement of Boroughs should be thought necessary, the disfranchisement in the opinion of the Committee, should be effected in the way not of compulsion, but of purchase, on terms to be accepted or refused at the option of the Persons concerned.—Something to this purpose had been thrown out to the Committee on the 9th of May; but was not approved, as it would have bound the Committee, without the valuable consideration of a Coalition with the Nobility. This suggested the idea of founding the Yorkshire Nobility by

VOL. III. X letter,

letter, communicating that Declaration with the opinion of a private Person unauthorized by the Committee, that such a Resolution would probably pass in that Assembly, if it were understood that their adoption of that measure, would be accepted by the Nobility as a sufficient inducement to *join* in the Association. In pursuance of this idea, a letter was drawn up which had the approbation of Sir George Savile; and, although I have no direct reason to think he would have undertaken to conduct the Negotiation, yet I believe he would have given his assistance as a mediator and common friend; if there had been a sufficient encouragement from those Gentlemen who were consulted, to carry the measure into execution. But although the Majority of the opinions collected was inclined to try the experiment; various objections were stated from different quarters. Some of these difficulties respecting the terms of the Proposition itself, or the mode of the Overture, might perhaps have been got over; but the disposition of the Nobility was thought to be so unripe for union, and in the present state of things any application seemed so little likely to produce the good proposed, that the advance would have been much disapproved by some of the most respectable Members of the Committee; and it was therefore found advisable, a few days ago, to inform Sir George Savile, the scheme must be laid aside for

for the present.—However, though this proposal has failed, I trust it has had no bad consequences; on the contrary, there seem to be good consequences, which may hereafter be derived from it, when a more favourable opportunity occurs for renewing the proposal. The Declaration had been originally drawn up by Lord Mahon; but if the idea of an Overture had been approved, it would have been necessary to obviate objections by some material alterations. With my best wishes for your good health,

And with most sincere esteem and regard,

I am, ever, my Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XIV.

Letter from JOHN DUNNING, Esq; to the Rev.
C. WYVILL.

PUTNEY, October 9th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

YOUR obliging favour from Hartlepool was forwarded to me in the due course of the post in Devonshire, where the indisposition

it found me in, will I hope be accepted as an apology for my not acknowledging it sooner.

I was in truth far from well during any part of the summer, but towards the end of it, the heat of the weather with the foul air of many crowded Assemblies, in which I was obliged to pass it, oppressed me to the degree of making me at length unable to attend to any thing. I have been for some time recovering, and one of the first things I have thought it necessary to attempt, is to thank you for the communication of your laudable though unsuccessful efforts in the public cause.

Whatever may be the ultimate issue of them, I must admire the steadiness with which you pursue them, without being diverted by the warmth with which you are attacked on one side, or the coldness you meet with on another. Preached at by your spiritual Peers, and unsupported by your temporal ones; men less convinced of the importance of their objects might be induced to abandon them, but the first I am persuaded you treat as it merits, and as much of Coalition with the latter as may be useful to the Public, I hope you will be found right in expecting to meet with at a more favourable opportunity. I do not recollect to have seen or until you mentioned it to have heard of the Paper drawn by Lord Mahon.

I am, with great respect and esteem,
Dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

J. DUNNING.
NUMBER XXVII.

NUMBER XXVII.

Paper L

*Note by the Rev. FRANCIS DODSWORTH to the
Rev. C. WYVILL, containing a Message from
the Earl of SHELburne to Mr. WYVILL;
with Mr. WYVILL's Answer annexed.*

MR. Frank Dodsworth presents his compliments to Mr. Wyvill; as he passed through London a little more than a fortnight ago he saw the Earl of Shelburne, who desired him, if he saw Mr. Wyvill, to give his compliments to him, and to assure him that he kept in view the Resolutions of the Association of the County of York, and meant to act nobly by the Association; or words to that effect.—Mr. F. Dodsworth's short stay at Watlase prevented him from delivering this Message in person to Mr. Wyvill.

WATLASS, August 15th, 1782,

Answer by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the preceding Note.

MR Wyvill presents his compliments to Mr. Frank Dodsworth, has just received the favour of his Note, dated August 15th, containing Lord Shelburne's obliging Message, which Mr. Wyvill begs Mr. Dodsworth to assure his Lordship, he will communicate to the York-shire Committee on the 31st of October; when the repeated promise of Lord Shelburne's support, will undoubtedly give great satisfaction to that respectable Body of Independent Men.

HARTLEPOOL, August 24th, 1782.

Paper II.

Note by the Rev. F. DODSWORTH to the Rev. C. WYVILL, respecting the Message of Lord SHELBURNE to Mr. WYVILL, with a Letter from his Lordship to Mr. DODSWORTH inclosed; and Mr. WYVILL's Answer to Mr. DODSWORTH annexed.

MR. Frank Dodsworth presents his compliments to Mr. Wyvill, and as it is impossible to express Lord Shelburne's meaning in better words than his own, has enclosed him a Letter

a Letter he has just received from his Lordship; and has only to add, that he understood Lord Shelburne's Message to Mr. Wyvill, exactly in the same light in which his Lordship represents it,

DODINGTON, near Feverham, October 6th, 1782.

Letter from the Earl of SHELburne to the Rev.
F. DODSWORTH, respecting his Message to Mr.
WYVILL.

SHELburne-HOUSE, October 3d, 1782.

Sir,

I Have just heard that Mr. Wyvill understands the Message I have sent him as a public Message, intended to be communicated to the Yorkshire Committee. I beg you'll lose no time in acquainting him, that I meant it as a communication to him personally, which took its rise merely from the accident of your mentioning the probability of your seeing him in Yorkshire, when you took leave of me. If I had thought it necessary to have made afresh any formal repetition of my sentiments to the Committee, I should certainly have written to Mr. Wyvill, or have troubled you with it in writing.

I am, with great regard, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,
SHELburne.

X 4

Answer

*Answer by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the preceding
Note.*

MR. Wyvill presents his compliments to Mr. Frank Dodsworth, and thanks him for the inclosure of Lord Shelburne's Letter on the subject of his late Message; which he finds similar to that he had the honour to receive from his Lordship, a few days ago.

Mr. Wyvill wrote to Lord Shelburne by yesterday's post; and it would certainly give him the greatest pleasure to find the reasons he has given for his conduct on this occasion, are satisfactory to his Lordship.

BURTON-HALL, October 14th, 1782.

Paper III.

Paper III.

*Letter from the Earl of SHELBURNE to the
Rev. C. WYVILL.*

SHELBURNE-HOUSE, October 3d, 1782.

Sir,

I Have just now heard that you have understood a Message delivered to you from me by Mr. Dodsworth, as a public Message intended to be communicated to the Yorkshire Committee. This makes me trouble you to acquaint you, that I meant it as a complimentary communication to you personally, which took its rise merely from Mr. Dodsworth's accidentally mentioning the probability of his seeing you, when he took leave of me in London. If I had seen any necessity of making afresh any formal Repetition of my sentiments to the Committee, I should certainly have troubled you with a Letter, or given it to Mr. Dodsworth in writing.

I am always happy in assuring you of the high esteem and regard, with which I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,
SHELBURNE,

Paper IV.

Paper IV.

*Letter by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of
SHELburne.*

BURTON-HALL, *October 12th, 1782.*

My Lord,

THE Yorkshire Gentlemen with whom I have had the honour to co-operate, were induced by their apprehension of imminent danger to the Constitution, to take an active part in its defence. They were sensible how much it behoved private men making such uncommon exertions for the correction of public abuses, to guard against every possible imputation of factious or interested views. If in these respects my sentiments and conduct had not been conformable to theirs, I should have ill deserved the confidence of such men. But, I am not conscious that any action of mine, in the course of my service as the Chairman or Delegate of the Yorkshire Committee, has been unfuitable to their acknowledged character of independence and integrity. Till the celebrated Motion in Parliament, by Mr. W. Pitt, for an inquiry into Parliamentary abuses, I had cautiously avoided to form a connection with the Great Leaders, either in Opposition, or after that, in office; however, in my private opinion, they might be highly respectable. This I believe your Lordship has already understood.—

After

After that period, in the beginning of June last, when I waited upon you, my Lord, and upon the late Marquis of Rockingham, I had not the honour to be personally known to your Lordship, or to your noble Colleague. With the strictest conformity to truth, I can declare, that when I paid my respects at Shelburne-House and in Grosvenor-square, I had no private views to serve, no interests of my own to recommend to your protection, or Lord Rockingham's. To make my acknowledgments for the salutary regulations establishing a more economical expenditure of Public Money, and reducing the undue influence of the Crown, which had been recently carried; and still more, to express my gratitude for the countenance given by Administration, to the Proposal for a substantial Reformation of Parliament, on the occasion of Mr. Pitt's Motion, were the purposes for which I desired the honour of a conference with your Lordship and Lord Rockingham. And I wished in a more particular manner to return thanks to your Lordship, for your early Declarations in favour of *that radical Reformation*, which I am convinced can alone secure the Liberties of the People, and the permanence of a wise and honest system of Government.

With respect to Lord Rockingham, I had the satisfaction to find in the course of our conversation, that he had expressly admitted at the

the instance of the Duke of Richmond, that a fair Parliamentary discussion of abuses in the state of Parliament itself, should be considered as one of the stipulated Articles of the NEW Administration. But I did not understand his Lordship to be pledged or inclined to give an active support to measures, which might be proposed as the result of that discussion.

But from your Lordship I had the pleasure to hear a strong confirmation of the professions you had previously made in your Letter to the Committee of Wiltshire, and in your Letter dated the 24th October, 1781, which I had the honour to receive in answer to mine of the 17th of October, 1781, which accompanied the manuscript copy of the Second Address of the Yorkshire Committee. From those Declarations it had been understood, that Lord Shelburne's active support of the Proposition for re-inforcing the County Representation, might be relied on. And I rejoiced on this occasion also, to find your Lordship "much approved the conduct of the Yorkshire Committee; advised adherence to their Association; and promised to give their measures your decided support." Such was the general purport of this conference, and on considering the nature of the conversation itself, and my particular situation as Chairman of the Yorkshire Committee, and other concomitant circumstances; it appeared to me not only that I was at liberty to communicate

communicate what had passed to the Committee, but that I could not omit the communication, without a breach of my duty to the Committee; and to the public at large.— It was my intention, therefore, to relate the general purport of these conversations to the Committee, on the 31st of this month; and to represent the several Declarations of Lord Rockingham and Lord Shelburne, respectively in the manner I have here stated them.

This was my fixed Resolution, when I had the honour in August last, to receive *a Message* from your Lordship, in a Note by Mr. Francis Dodsworth; in which the Declarations to the Wiltshire Committee, to myself in the Letter of the 24th of October, 1781; and afterwards in the conference in June, 1782, in a few emphatical words were most strongly confirmed.— I considered this message as an intimation that change of position, had made no change in political sentiments. To my judgment it appeared in the light of a recognition of former promises; which your Lordship thought fit to repeat on your accession to your present post, at the head of the Administration. And as those promises had been sufficiently explicit, and had been given at various times, and in different situations; and this assurance of your intention “to deal nobly by the Association of Yorkshire,” came to me by a channel of unquestionable authenticity, I did conceive that I might

might with propriety communicate intelligence so honourable to your Lordship, so consistent with your prior engagements on this subject, in the manner most beneficial to the Public service. I was satisfied that instead of waiting to impart this Message also to the Meeting, on the 31st of October, it would be right and probably would have excellent effects in promoting the Reformation of Parliament, to make it immediately known to the Yorkshire Gentlemen, and to the other Committees, &c. in different parts of the kingdom. This has been done accordingly; and the communication would by this time have been much more extensive, if to my great surprise, I had not understood from your Lordship's Letter of the 3d of October, 1782, that I have mistaken the nature of this Message. I own it is with the utmost regret I receive the explanation, that it ought to have been considered only as a complimentary communication. If an injurious use can have been made of the information, by any of those persons to whom I have transmitted it, I do sincerely assure you, my Lord, it is most contrary to my intention or inclination. I hope no bad effects can possibly proceed from the transmission; and within my own observation I discover no reason to suppose it.

Copies of different Letters in which I have mentioned the Message in question, with my list of Letters written on the subject, are inclosed

closed for your Lordship's inspection; and if it shall be your desire, I shall acknowledge to each person to whom the intelligence has been sent, that I have misunderstood your meaning in this Message.

I see nothing, however, which can alter my opinion respecting the obligation I am under to state to the Yorkshire Committee, the result of my interview with your Lordship and Lord Rockingham. But as in this material instance, I have so unfortunately erred in my judgment, I am not without apprehension, I may have made a similar mistake, respecting the nature of those assurances of approbation and assistance, which I had the satisfaction to receive, in the conference at Shelburne-House. I have not the most distant intention to mistake a single expression, or to represent your Lordship in any light but that of truth. And I will venture to add, if I really did not mistake your meaning in that conversation, I shall rejoice to communicate to the Yorkshire Gentlemen, what will so justly exalt their veneration for the Earl of Shelburne.

I therefore intreat your Lordship will have the goodness to acquaint me, whether you desire that I should communicate your explanation of the Message to the Yorkshire Committee, and the other Gentlemen, who have been informed of it: and also, whether if I should state to the Committee the general purport of the

the conference at Shelburne-House, as I have stated it in this Letter, I should commit any mistake which your Lordship would chuse to rectify.

I am, my Lord, with high respect,
Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,
C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

*Letters, of which Copies were communicated by the
Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of SHELBURNE,
on the 12th of October, 1782.*

I.

*Letter to many Members of the Committee of
Association of the County of York*

HARTLEPOOL, September 12th, 1782.

Sir,

AS Lord Shelburne is now understood to take the lead in his Majesty's Counsels, I trust it will not be unacceptable to inform you that I have just received a most obliging
Message

Message from his Lordship, strongly expressing his Resolution to support the Association of the County of York. I would beg you to communicate this pleasing intelligence to the Members of our Committee, and other Friends to the cause of Parliamentary Reformation in your neighbourhood; but I wish to defer the publication of this Message, till its appearance may have a more considerable effect in favour of our intended Petition.

Mr. Gray's Clerk happening to be here, I have employed him to write this, which I hope you will excuse, as I really have at this moment a good deal of Association business on my hands.

I am, Sir, very faithfully yours,

C. WYVILL.

Letter by the Rev. C. WYVILL to DAVID
HARTLEY, Esq.

HARTLEPOOL, September 13th, 1782.

Dear Sir,

I AM confident that intelligence which throws any light on the disposition of the Minister respecting the Reformation of Parliament, or which in any degree improves the prospect of success, cannot be disagreeable to you who have so uniformly given that measure your
VOL. III. Y strenuous

strenuous support. It is with much satisfaction, therefore, I mention that I have lately received a Message from Lord Shelburne, in which he strongly expresses his resolution to support the Association of the County of York. Honest men may differ in opinion whether the independence of America, should be declared immediately or not. But all real Friends of the Constitution will agree, that a substantial Melioration of Parliament is the undoubted interest of the Public.

I am, Dear Sir, with great regard,

Most sincerely yours,

C. WYVILL.

3.

Letter by the Rev. C. WYVILL to Dr. JOHN JEBB.

HARTLEPOOL, September 18th, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I Have the satisfaction to inform you that I have received a Message from Lord Shelburne, strongly expressing his resolution to support the Association of the County of York. Can such intelligence be unacceptable to my good Friend? I trust not. Many thanks for your obliging communication of the account of the late Meeting in Westminster Hall.

I am, Dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

C. WYVILL.

No. 4.

Letter by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of
SURREY.

HARTLEPOOL, September 18th, 1782.

My Lord,

I AM confident that intelligence which throws any light on the disposition of the present Minister, respecting the Reformation of Parliament, or which in any degree may be thought to open a better prospect of success, cannot be unacceptable to your Lordship, I therefore mention with great satisfaction, that I have lately received a Message from Lord Shelburne, strongly expressing his resolution to support the Association of the County of York.

The Yorkshire Committee will meet on the 31st of October, when it is probable that some day near the end of November, will be fixed for the intended General Meeting of the County. Might I suggest how much your Lordship's presence would add to the weight and dignity of the Meeting, and in other respects would produce the happiest effect; or, if that be inconvenient, would your Lordship permit me to propose your name to be added to the Committee, if the re-appointment of that body should be resolved by the County.

Y 2

The

The Yorkshire Gentlemen are well apprized how much the cause of the Public is indebted to Lord Surrey, and would be proud to number him in the list of their Associates.

I am, my Lord, with very sincere respect,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
C. WYVILL.

Many other Letters respecting this Message of the Earl of Shelburne, were written to the Friends of a Parliamentary Reform in different parts of the Kingdom; but as they contained no material variation from these Letters, it was thought sufficient to furnish his Lordship with these, and with a list of Persons to whom the rest were written.

Paper VI.

*Letter from the Earl of SHELburne to the Rev.
C. WYVILL.*

SHELburne-HOUSE, October 16th, 1781.

Sir,

I AM favoured with your Letter of the 12th, this afternoon, and cannot possibly have the smallest objection to your reference to my Letter to the Wiltshire Committee, and likewise to your communication of my Letter to you of the 24th of October 1781, together with my conversation with you, stated as it is, with the utmost truth and accuracy in your Letter

Letter of the 12th instant. As I certainly intended the Message sent to you by Mr. Dodsworth, merely for your personal satisfaction; I wish any communication to the Committee may remain upon the former grounds, which you may rely upon my best endeavours to promote in the manner which I may find most effectual.

In this view, however, I do not think it material to recal any thing you have hitherto wrote.

I have the honour to be,

With very great esteem, Sir,

Your faithful and most obedient servant,

SHELBURNE.

Paper VII.

*Letter by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of
SHELBURNE.*

BURTON-HALL, October 21st, 1782.

My Lord,

I Received yesterday with the highest satisfaction the honour of your Lordship's Letter, dated the 16th of this month. To that Letter, and to mine of the 12th instant to your Lordship, any communication of the conversation at Shelburne-House, or the Message by Mr. Frank
Y 3 Dodsworth,

Dodsworth, which I shall make to the York, Shire Committee on the 31st of October, shall be perfectly conformable.

On the subject of that Message some conversation will unavoidably arise at that Meeting.— But however desirous the Committee may be to express their acknowledgments to your Lordship on that occasion, yet when the nature of the Message is rightly understood, as intended for my personal satisfaction, and not as a formal communication to the Committee, I imagine, the apparent impropriety will prevent their taking it as the ground of any Resolution whatever.

I am, my Lord, with the greatest respect,
Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper VII.

Paper VIII.

Letter by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Earl of SHELburne, with a short Account of Mr. WYVILL's separate Interviews with his Lordship and the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM, on the 8th of June, 1782, as stated to the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 31st of October, 1782; and also Resolutions of that Committee communicated by Mr. WYVILL to the Earl of SHELburne.

BURTON-HALL, November 3d, 1782.

My Lord,

I Take the earliest opportunity after the Meeting of the Yorkshire Committee, on the 31st of October, and the first of November inst. to assure your Lordship that the business of the Meeting was closed without any Resolution having been passed by that Assembly, materially different from what I hoped they would adopt. The conversation I had the honour to hold with your Lordship and Lord Rockingham, was stated exactly to the Committee, as it stands in my Letter of the 12th of October, to your Lordship; and a copy of Mr. Frank Dodsworth's Note, containing your Lordship's Message to me was read and shewn to the Committee, together with copies of my Letters to several Gentlemen

on that subject: in consequence of which the Committee passed two Resolutions; one thanking me for my conduct; the other dispensing with the production of other Papers in my possession, which I had stated to the Committee, as improper to be produced. A Copy of those Resolutions taken from the Clerk's minutes, is inclosed for your Lordship's satisfaction; and also the Paper which was shewn to the Committee, giving a short account of the interview I was honoured with by your Lordship and Lord Rockingham. The other Resolutions, having no relation to the subject of your Lordship's communications, are omitted.

I have only to add that, the two Resolutions which are transmitted to your Lordship, will not be published.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

With the greatest respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

C. WYVILL,

Short Account by the Rev. C. WYVILL of his Interviews with Lord SHELBUENE and Lord ROCKINGHAM separately, in June, 1782.

TO make his acknowledgments for the salutary Regulations, establishing a more economical expenditure of public money, and reducing

ducing the undue influence of the Crown which had been so recently carried; and still more, to express his gratitude for the countenance given by Administration to the proposal for a substantial Reformation of Parliament, on the occasion of Mr. Pitt's Motion, were the purposes for which he desired the honour of a conference with Lord Shelburne and Lord Rockingham. And he desired in a more particular manner to return thanks to Lord Shelburne, for his early Declarations in favour of that radical Reformation, which can alone secure the Liberties of the People, and the permanence of a wise and honest system of Government,

With respect to Lord Rockingham, he had the satisfaction to find in the course of the conversation, that he had expressly admitted at the instance of the Duke of Richmond, that a fair Parliamentary discussion of abuses in the state of Parliament itself, should be considered as one of the stipulated Articles of the NEW Administration. But he did not understand his Lordship to be pledged or inclined to give an active support to measures which might be proposed as the result of that discussion.

From Lord Shelburne he had the pleasure to hear a strong confirmation of the professions he had previously made in his Letter to the Committee of Wiltshire; and in his Letter dated the 24th of October, 1781, which

Mr.

Mr. Wyvill had the honour to receive in answer to his of the 17th of October, 1781, which accompanied the manuscript copy of the Second Address of the Yorkshire Committee. On this occasion he rejoiced to find his Lordship, "much approved the conduct of the Yorkshire Committee; advised adherence to their Association, and promised to give their measures his decided support,"

C. WYVILL.

Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 31st of October, 1782,

Present, SEVENTY-FIVE MEMBERS:

THE Rev. Mr. Wyvill having communicated certain steps taken by him, for promoting the objects of the Association, since the last Meeting of the Committee, and produced several Letters received by him during that interval.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Committee be given to the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, for the conduct he has pursued in the above instances.

Resolved, That the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, be not requested to produce to the Committee any other Letters or Papers in his custody, received since the 4th of April last, touching the concerns

cerns of the Association, save those already laid before the Committee.

Paper IX.

The substance of a Conversation between the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM and the Rev. C. WYVILL, on Saturday, June 8th. 1782, as written down immediately after the Conference by the Rev. C. WYVILL.

AFTER some common civilities on both sides, Lord Rockingham produced a Paper containing short Notes of what Articles were proposed by him, through Lord Thurlow to the King, as the terms on which Lord Rockingham and his Friends, would engage in Administration; and which his Majesty acceded to.— The principal of these Notes were.

Independence of America, *no veto*,

The Contractors Bill,

The Revenue Officers Bill,

Mr. Burke's Bill, the great parts of it,

General Peace, if to be had!

On reading these Notes, I professed to Lord Rockingham my general approbation of all these

these Articles, and of Lord Rockingham's honourable dealing in stipulating these advantages to the Public; but stated with precision to his Lordship, that the reason of my wishing to have the honour of a conference with him was, the countenance he had given to the cause of Parliamentary Reformation, particularly as so many of his Lordship's Friends had supported the Motion of Mr. W. Pitt, on that subject:—Lord Rockingham in reply stated, that the Duke of Richmond, on seeing the conditions above-mentioned, had observed, that no mention was made of a Reform of Parliament, and proposed as an additional Stipulation, that the discussion of that subject in Parliament should be agreed to; which he, viz. Lord Rockingham consented to:—But that he could not approve the Duke of Richmond's Plan:—and he neither had yet seen any sufficient concurrence of Gentlemen for promoting the measure of a change in the Representation, nor any well-digested Plan for that purpose. The difficulties, therefore, he apprehended were great. To this I replied, that in the present stage of the business, the Parliament had done all I wished in debating on the Question of Mr. W. Pitt, although it had postponed any Resolution till the dissatisfaction of the People with the present state of their Representation, were formally made known to Parliament. A change in the frame of the House of Commons, was an undertaking

undertaking of the greatest consequence; and which ought not to be attempted by any Minister or by Parliament, without a pretty General Declaration in its favour by the Collective Body; lest at some less favourable period it should be brought as a precedent, to countenance a second change that might be disadvantageous or even ruinous to the Liberties of the People.—That I conceived the Duke of Richmond's Plan, was by no means likely to obtain any degree of support in Yorkshire, or in the generality of the Counties; as far as my information could enable me to judge; that my own particular opinion was clearly against it, as neither practicable nor safe in the present circumstances, especially with a Capital where the populace are exceedingly numerous. That it might be difficult for a popular Meeting to enter into the detail of such business; but that there would be after the Revenue Officers Bill took effect, a certain description of Boroughs to be pointed out, which might be abolished on better grounds, and with less opposition than any other; viz. those Boroughs which will chiefly be effected by the operation of that Bill, among which the Cornish Boroughs and the Cinque Ports, are the *most* *exceptionable*.—Lord Rockingham in the course of the conversation had mentioned that the Revenue Officers Bill, would disfranchise about

5500 Custom-House Officers;

2500

2500 Incidental Ditto;

5000 Excise Officers;

and would affect materially Elections of about 50 or 60 Members of Parliament, now chiefly nominated by the Crown. On this, I observed, that when these thirteen thousand Electors are cut off from their privilege of voting, the Cornish Boroughs and Cinque Ports will be liable to the objection of fewness of numbers, in as much force as the Burgage Tenure Boroughs, with this farther disadvantage superadded, that their remaining Electors will be from their poverty exposed to corruption in an extreme degree, to which the opulent possessor of Burgage Tenures is not liable: and that an entire disfranchisement of these Boroughs would furnish a considerable number of Representatives to be transferred to Counties, by an operation of less extent in the number disfranchised, than that of the Revenue Officers Bill.—After having suggested this observation, I desired Lord Rockingham's leave to mention to the Committee what had passed, and having obtained it, I assured his Lordship it would give great pleasure to many of his friends in Yorkshire, to hear he had given this degree of countenance to the cause of Parliamentary Reformation. But when I asked his Lordship whether I might represent him as a general well-wisher to the cause of a Parliamentary Reformation, I did not receive any clear and decisive answer.

Paper X.

*Paper X.**Explanation of the Editor's Conduct respecting the
Message of the Earl of SHELBURNE.*

IT has been the Editor's fortune, at different times, to hold correspondence with some of our Ministers of State, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. He who acted as Chairman of a Committee appointed and renewed at several General Meetings of the County of York, to promote that Reform on the principles adopted by their Constituents, could not but consider every such Communication from men in high official station, to be truly and properly a Communication of a Public Nature, to him as Chairman of that Committee, *unless the contrary was distinctly specified at the time when the Communication was made.* On this principle he acted, when the message from Lord Shelburne was received. He thought it a message which not only might, but ought to be imparted by him to the Committee, whose servant he was, and also to the Friends of their Association in different parts of the Kingdom: And he was happy to find, at the next Meeting of the Committee, that his conduct was approved by that body of men. They agreed with him in the opinion, that the message in question, and the Editor's subsequent correspondence with Lord Shelburne respecting

respecting it, were properly to be considered as being Papers of a Public Nature; but for prudential reasons, the production of the subsequent correspondence was dispensed with by the Committee, on the Representation made by the Editor, and confirmed by some of his Friends to whom these Papers had been confidentially shown for this purpose; viz. that in the violent State of Parties in the country at that time, the Communication of this subsequent part of the correspondence, could do no service to the cause of Reformation, but probably might injure it in a very great degree. It was a great satisfaction to the Editor, that he prevailed with the Committee on that occasion, neither to insist that these subsequent Letters should be produced to them, nor to direct that any part of the correspondence should be published. But the reasons which then rendered this forbearance on their part proper, at this great distance of time, when the State of Parties, and the situation of the noble person principally concerned, have been so materially changed, cannot be thought to retain any force. The season therefore is now arrived, when the Editor feels that these Papers may be published with propriety, not only for the satisfaction of that part of the Committee to whom they never have been communicated, but also with a view to submit this vindication of his conduct to the judgement of the Public.

On similar grounds he thought, and he still thinks

thinks himself justifiable for having declared his intention not to suppress his correspondence with Mr. Pitt, although he forbears the publication in this case, as in that before of Lord Shelburne, till some very material change respecting Mr. Pitt, his own necessary vindication, or the public cause of Reformation shall render such a measure evidently proper. A full explanation of his sentiments and conduct on this particular case, is reserved for a more fit opportunity. In the mean-time, the Editor trusts that whenever the Papers alluded to shall be submitted to public inspection, it will then be found and acknowledged even by men who from personal friendship, or a fond admiration of the character of Mr. Pitt, have been most susceptible of uneasiness on his account, that the Editor in his zeal to serve the Public has not forgotten that justice and candour which are due to Mr. Pitt; that he has been solicitous as he ought always to be, to separate and to keep back from the public eye whatever may justly be deemed a communication of a private and confidential nature; that the best means in his power have been employed to ascertain his right to retain and publish, or his obligation to return or suppress the most important of the Papers in question, * concerning which alone any doubt seemed likely to arise; and that those Papers, which from the use of the means alluded to,

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* viz. The heads of a Bill to Reform the Representation.

or otherwise might appear indisputably to be Papers of a public nature, far from being produced wantonly or with any malevolent view, were published as the correspondence respecting the Message of Lord Shelburne now has been, after a long delay, and from the laudable or warrantable motive alone, either to promote the interest of the Public or to explain and vindicate the conduct of an Individual.

NUMBER XXVIII.

Paper I.

Letter from DR. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN to the
REV. C. WYVILL.

PASSY, June 16th, 1785.

Sir,

I Send you herewith the sketch I promised you. Perhaps it may be of use to publish something of the kind: For if the power of chusing now in the Boroughs continues to be allowed as a right, they may think themselves more justifiable in demanding more for it, or in holding back longer than they would if they find that it begins to be considered as an abuse.

With great esteem, I am, Sir,
Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

Paper II.

Paper II.

The Justice of Disfranchising the smaller Boroughs in England, and the Prudence of allowing them a Compensation for their extinguished Franchises considered by Dr. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

NO man or body of men in any Nation, can have a just right to any privilege or franchise not common to the rest of the Nation, without having done the Nation some service equivalent, for which the franchise or privilege was the recompence or consideration.

No man or body of men can be justly deprived of a Common Right, but for some equivalent offence or injury done to the Society in which he enjoyed such Right.

If a number of men are unjustly deprived of a Common Right, and the same is given in addition to the Common Right of another number who have not merited such addition, the injustice is double.

Few, if any of the Boroughs in England, ever performed any *such* particular service to the Nation, entitling them to what they now claim as a Privilege in Elections.

Originally in England when the King issued his Writs, calling upon Counties, Cities, and Boroughs to depute Persons who should meet

him in a Parliament ; the intention was to obtain by that means more perfect information of the general State of the Kingdom, its faculties, strength, and disposition, together with the advice their accumulated wisdom might afford him in such " arduous affairs of the Realm" as he had to propose. And he might reasonably hope that measures approved by the Deputies in such an Assembly, would on their return home be by them well explained, and rendered agreeable to their Constituents and the Nation in general. At that time being sent to Parliament was not considered as being put into the way of preferment or increase of fortune, therefore no bribe was given to obtain the appointment. The Deputies were to be paid wages by their Constituents ; therefore the being obliged to send and pay was considered rather as a duty than as a privilege. At this day in New England, many Towns who may and ought to send Members to the Assembly, sometimes neglect to do it ; they are then summoned to answer for their neglect, and fined if they cannot give a good excuse ; such as some common misfortune, or some extraordinary public expence which disabled them from affording conveniently the necessary wages. And the wages allowed being barely sufficient to defray the Deputy's expence, no solicitations are used to be chosen.

In England, as soon as the being sent to Parliament was found to be a step towards acquiring both honour and fortune, solicitations were practised, and where they were insufficient, money was given. Both the ambitious and the avaricious became Candidates. But to solicit the poor labourer for his vote being humiliating to the proud man, and to pay for it hurting the lover of money, they, when they met, joined in an Act to diminish both those inconveniences by depriving the Poor of the Right of Voting, which certainly they were not impowered to do by the Electors, their Constituents, the Majority of whom were probably People of little property. The Act was therefore not only unjust but void. These lower People were immediately afterwards oppressed by another Act impowering the Justices to fix the hire of day Labourers, and their hours of work, and to send them to the House of Correction if they refused to work for such hire; which was deposing them from their condition of Freemen, and making them literally slaves.

But this was taking from *many* Freemen a *Common Right*, and confining it to a *few*. To give it back again to the many is a different operation. Of this the few have no just cause to complain, because they still retain the Common Right they always had, and they lose only the exclusive additional power which they ought

ought never to have had. And if they used it when they had it, as a means of obtaining money; they should in justice were it practicable, be obliged to refund, and distribute such money among those who had been so unjustly deprived of their Right of Voting; or, forfeit it to the Public.

Corporations therefore or Boroughs, who from being originally called to send Deputies to Parliament, when it was considered merely as a duty and not as a particular privilege, and therefore was never purchased by any equivalent services to the Public, continue to send now that by a change of times it affords them profit in bribes or emoluments of various kinds, have in reality no *right* to such advantages, which are besides in effect prejudicial to the Nation, some of those who buy, thinking they may also sell.

They should therefore in justice be immediately deprived of such pretended right, and reduced to the condition of Common Freemen.

But they are perhaps too strong and their interest too weighty to permit such justice to be done. And a regard for public good in those People influencing a voluntary resignation, is not to be expected.

If that be the case it may be necessary to submit to the power of present circumstances, passions and prejudices, and purchase since we can do no better, their consent; as men when
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they cannot otherwise recover property unjustly detained from them, advertise a reward to whoever will restore it, promising that no questions shall be asked.

Paper III.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Dr. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

PARIS, June 17th, 1785.

Sir,

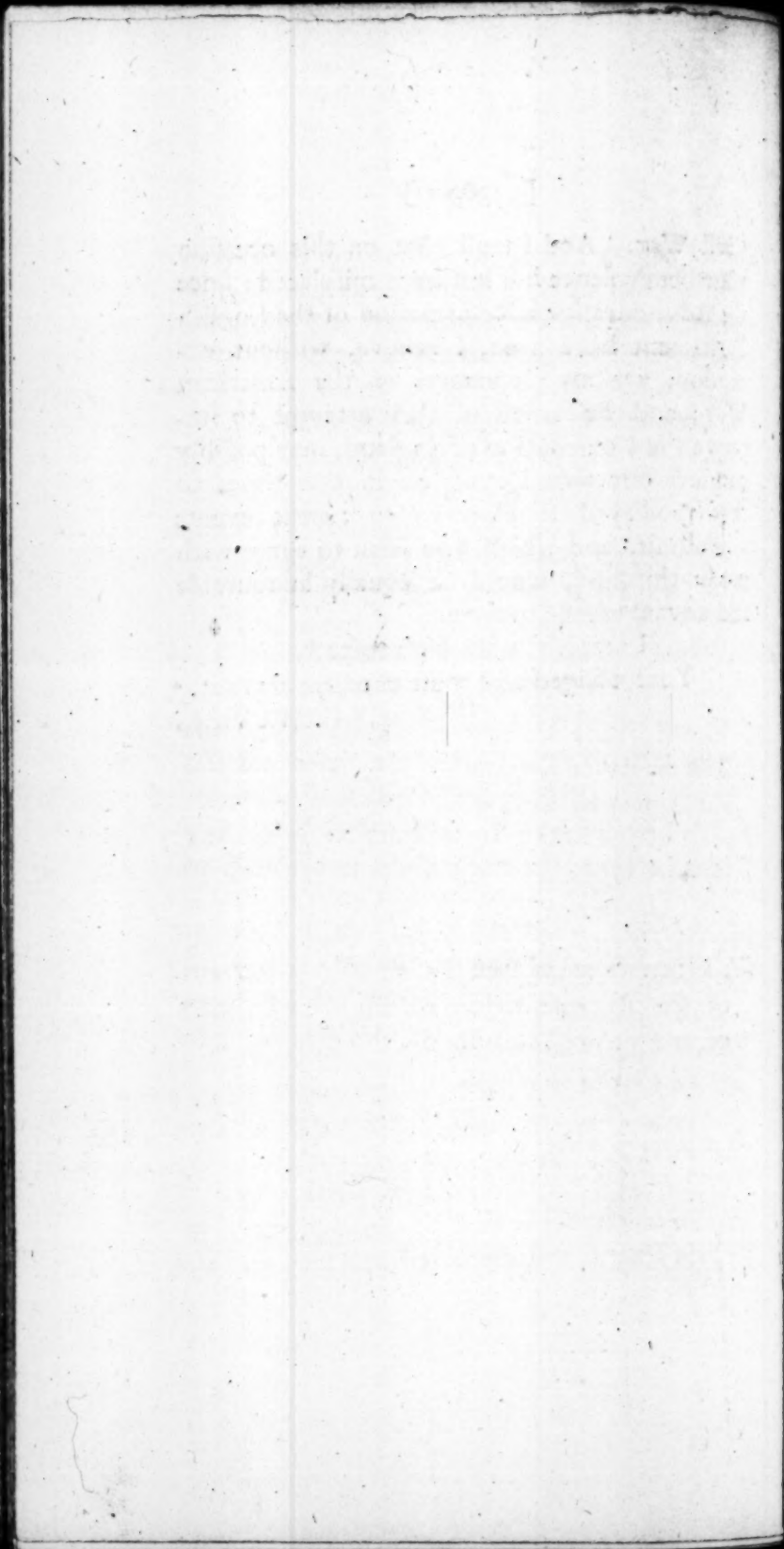
I Have received the honour of your Letter of the 16th instant, accompanied with a Paper, in which you have proved, by a short train of clear and satisfactory reasoning, that the Elective Franchise now enjoyed by the small Boroughs in England is not an absolute right, which can only be forfeited on conviction of misusage, but that it is a privilege, conferred upon them in different periods of our history, with partiality and in a manner injurious to the Common Right of Representation; and consequently, that it is a privilege justly resumable by the state, without the consent of such Boroughs previously obtained, without any previous

vious proof of their delinquency, or any compensation for their abolished Franchise: at the same time, you have admitted the expediency in the present state of our Constitution, and under the various disadvantages attending an attempt to restore it, that a pecuniary offer should be proposed as an inducement to the small Boroughs, to make a voluntary surrender of their obnoxious privilege.

Accept, Sir, my best thanks for this very kind communication of your sentiments on a subject of much importance to the happiness of England. From their own intrinsic solidity, those sentiments must have great weight with every unprejudiced mind, even if it should be thought advisable not to apprise the public they are the sentiments of a man, to whose ability and persevering virtue the American States are principally indebted for their political salvation. But highly as I esteem the wisdom of your opinion and advice, I place a still higher value on that philanthropy, which has induced you to bestow so much attention on this subject, in the midst of your many urgent avocations when just on the point of leaving Europe to return to America. I consider this not only as a mark of your general benevolence, but as a proof that your peculiar good-will to England, lately our common Country, has neither been diminished by any personal disgust, nor impaired by the hostilities of an unhappy Civil

Civil War. And I trust that on this occasion your benevolence has not been misplaced ; since the Advocates for a Reformation of the English Parliament have been, I believe, without exception, zealous Opponents of the American War ; and the success of their attempt to improve the Constitution of England, may possibly conduct our two Countries, in due time, to that modified reunion which recent events will admit, and which you seem to agree with me in thinking, would be equally honourable and advantageous to both.

I am, Sir, with high respect,
Your obliged and most obedient servant,
C. WYVILL.



APPENDIX
TO THE
THIRD VOLUME.

CONTAINING,

- I. The Editor's Defence of Dr. Price and the Reformers of England.**
- II. His Letter to the Right Honourable William Pitt, in 1793.**
- III. Proceedings of the Society of Friends of the People, with their Petition for a Reform of the Representation of the People, and other Papers annexed.** in 1792

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of the Representation of the People, and
other Papers annexed.

DEFENCE

Dr. PRICE, &c.

HAVING lately employed myself in forming a Collection of Political Papers, chiefly respecting the attempt by several of our Counties, principal Cities and Towns, to correct the Corruption and restore the Freedom and Independence of Parliament, from near the end of the year 1779, to the middle of the year 1785, I have been unavoidably led by the nature of my task to peruse the greatest part of the Papers which were published by Popular Meetings, in different parts of the kingdom, during that period. After this review of their Proceedings, I think it may be asserted with truth, that the general conduct of these Assemblies of the Collective Body and the Committees appointed by

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them, was unexceptionably prudent and manly; ~~that~~ their language was firm but decent, becoming FREEMEN alarmed by the misfortunes of an ill-fated and expensive War, and justly offended by the servility and corruption of their Representatives; that their measures were sincerely designed to promote the Public Good, supported with vigour and persevering zeal, yet with a constant adherence to order and legality, and finally successful to terminate those fatal hostilities, and introduce a more faithful and economical expenditure of the Public Money. But the Associations had been convinced at an early period that somewhat more than Peace and a retrenchment of the Public Expenditure was necessary for the safety of the Country. They had seen, that the Corruption of Parliament and the continuation of the Civil War with America were justly to be imputed to those gross abuses in the frame and duration of Parliament, which had chiefly originated in the present century; and that unless an effectual redress of those grievances could be obtained, the evils of a corrupt Administration might soon be experienced again, to the utter ruin of the nation. Against these abuses therefore the efforts of the Popular Meetings were principally directed, but without success, although in effect they aimed at not much more than the Restoration of the Constitution as it had stood soon after the æra of the Revolution. For since that period, from the great extension of our commerce and distant territorial

torial possessions, and the consequent augmentation of our naval and military establishments, from the continual accumulation of taxes, and the proportional increase of those persons by whom they are collected, the Crown has gradually been enabled to influence or command Elections in many Sea-Ports and other places, while within the same period, in still more Boroughs, the Aristocracy by various unwarrantable arts, especially by creating fraudulent and fictitious votes, has destroyed the Right of Election, and acquired the absolute power of nomination. To obtain the Repeal of the Septennial Act, and a just Redress of these usurpations in the Boroughs, were the ultimate objects of the Popular pursuit; but the last of these necessary measures the Associations did not endeavour to effect on the extensive principle of universal suffrage; but in a more temperate mode, in which a substantial improvement of the Constitution might have been safely and peaceably accomplished. And in the whole progress of this enterprise of the People to correct great and dangerous abuses, I believe not one instance can be produced of disloyalty to the Prince on the Throne, or disaffection to the Constitution, which is discoverable in any expression by any one Public Meeting; hardly, perhaps, by any individual Member of the Associated Bodies.

In these measures the Protestant Dissenters concurred, with equal temper and moderation, and with signal unanimity throughout the king-

dom. But if any man should entertain a suspicion, that under this cloak of moderation they covered sinister designs at that time, it is but impartial justice to state, that the suspicion must be ill-founded, that it is contradicted by facts which prove their attachment to the true Principles of the Constitution, at that season of great and general discontent; when any latent disloyalty to the Prince, any secret wish to change the general Frame of our Government, would have been disclosed by the heat and effervescence of the times. The reverse of these dispositions then was theirs; in every Meeting, of which the Dissenters composed a majority, or any considerable part, it may be remarked with truth, that the language of their Petitions, and of their Plans of Association, strongly expressed their adherence to the Principles of our mixed Government, by King, Lords, and Commons. I shall particularly point out the Petition of the County of Cambridge in 1780, that of the County of Kent in 1782, and the Forms of Association adopted about that time by the towns of Cambridge and Nottingham, as containing evident proofs of this assertion.*

These circumstances appear sufficiently to exculpate the Dissenters from the charge of disaffection at that juncture; and since the preservation of our Constitutional Liberties, and of the Brunswick Family on the Throne, may be justly ascribed

* For these Papers, see the Appendix.

ascribed in a great measure to their zeal and attachment, often manifested in times of Public distress and danger; any charge of disaffection on that respectable Body of Men, now when Public affairs are conducted with prosperity and with attention to the interests and opinions of the Community, must appear highly improbable; and if not established by very clear and decisive proofs, ought to be rejected as a groundless and incredible accusation.

And yet this injurious imputation, which, on the late motion for a repeal of the Test Laws, was urged against the Dissenters with uncommon vehemence, seems to have been lightly admitted as a charge indisputably proved, though unsupported by any more solid ground of conviction, than vague surmise and personal invective. By the Test Laws, the Dissenters are ignominiously marked as Men unfit to be trusted with any honourable or advantageous Office, or a share even in the Government of a Corporate Town: they are forbidden to indulge the wish, which every good Citizen must naturally feel, to serve his Country in any civil or military Post for which his attainments fit him; their capacities for Public employment are doomed to lie uncultivated and useless; the avenues of honest ambition are barred against them, and the conditions on which alone they can be opened are more degrading than the exclusion itself. Under this long proscription, the patience

ence of the Dissenters was not wearied out; their affection to the Government, which, in this respect had treated them harshly, was not alienated. For fifty years they acquiesced in silence under the disgrace and disabilities of the Test Laws. At last, observing the more liberal spirit of this age, and the tolerant disposition which had been displayed by Parliament in their recent concessions to the Roman Catholics, and to their own Ministers, they were encouraged to renew their humble requests, that the Test Laws might be repealed. But when their complaints were heard once more, they were not couched in sullen or reproachful language; they were expressed with a respectful deference to Parliament, yet with that decent firmness which freedom and conscious integrity will always inspire. Nothing prior or subsequent to their defeat has indicated a spirit of mutinous disaffection, or disobedience to the Laws. After repeated denials of that equality of Civil Rights, to which every unoffending Citizen has a just claim, they have ceased to importune Parliament; they have retired from the Bar of the Legislature with the dignity of injured but patient Men, who have learned to bear legal ignominy without dejection or unseemly irritation; who have resolved to await the slow Revolution of Public Opinion, and relying on the rectitude of their cause, and the increasing influence of reason alone, still trust that their Countrymen
will

will at last grant them that justice which they have hitherto refused.

Against such Men requesting to share the Common Rights of Citizens, the ordinary pleas of Intolerance would have been addressed with little effect to the candour and liberality of Parliament; their eager opposers would have attempted in vain to give to their unjust policy the colour of political expediency; in vain they would have endeavoured to alarm the Friends of our limited Monarchy, by renewing the hackneyed objections, that Dissenters, deeming Episcopacy unwarrantable by Scripture, must be enemies to the Institution of Bishops, must wish the Abolition of an Order of Men who form an important part of the Legislature; whose right of voting with the Peers could not be taken away without exposing the Crown to Democratic-Invasion.

The suggestion is unsupported by any collateral circumstances, or any apparent likelihood of danger; it probably would have made little impression on Parliament, and it surely could have been applied with little prospect of success to those Senators, whose opinions justly bear the greatest weight in that Assembly. For it must have been instantly felt, that to wish some important changes in the Form of Government is not inconsistent with the true idea of allegiance; that rational and good Men might deem the Cinque Port Barons an objectionable part of the

the House of Commons, or the translation of Bishops a defect in the House of Peers; that it even might be their opinion, that the entire exclusion of that Order from the House of Peers would be neither injurious to Religion, nor disadvantageous to the political interest of the Community; and yet such Men might be truly good Citizens, might cordially approve our Government by King, Lords, and Commons, might upon the whole be well satisfied with that share of happiness which may be enjoyed under our Constitution; might have no design, no wish to disturb the tranquillity of the Public; on the contrary, conceiving our Government to be invested with a lawful and beneficial authority, they might cheerfully submit to it in a private station, and be willing in a public capacity to support it with fidelity and active zeal.

These are the dispositions which, in a larger view than that of strict law, constitute a good Citizen; and, where these dispositions are evident, it is a matter of no concern to the State, to scrutinize thought, or to pass a judicial sentence on private opinion, and harmless if not useful speculation. If Men of these dispositions should not be thought to bear that dutiful attachment to the State, which our laws require, if allegiance should be construed to imply an acceptance of the Constitution and all its establishments, as perfect models of political wisdom, and absolutely incapable of any emendation;
allegiance

allegiance would be incompatible with common sense and observation. Such an idea of allegiance is manifestly indefensible—contending parties must have agreed to renounce it.

In all probability, therefore, the application for a repeal of the Test Laws would have been admitted by the united wisdom and justice of the House, if more powerful means had not been found to rouse the jealous spirit of State Policy, and to suppress, in minds of the greatest benignity and wisdom of the purest piety and virtue, their better principles of TOLERATION.

Some Dissenting Ministers of much ability and reputation had hazarded, with an honest zeal, to publish their opinions on the inutility and impropriety of any Religious Establishment; had expressed a detestation of the Corruptions of Parliament, and an admiration of certain Republican Forms of Government. These hardy sentiments were detailed to the House in quotations from the Authors alluded to; and their Adversary, whose declamatory talents for some years had been little attended to, had once more the satisfaction to find that the House listened to him, and that his personal invectives had made that impression which he wished, and which his reasoning must have failed to produce. A majority of the Members were shocked by these freedoms of speculative Men, they were appalled by the magnified dangers of INNOVATION; one common sentiment of fear pervaded their

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breasts,

breasts, stifled their accustomed feelings of equity and benevolence, and determined them still to prolong the restraint of those partial laws, by which our Dissenting Brethren are held in a state of disgraceful inferiority; "Thou art not Caesar's Friend if thou let these Men go free."

But if the Dissenting Ministers, who were reprobated on this occasion with so much severity, had really been as bad Citizens, as turbulent and seditious Men, as their Accuser wished to represent them, how could it consist with justice for the faults of two or three Individual Dissenters to punish thousands of that denomination, not only without evidence of their disloyalty, but even against their solemn protestations of attachment to the Constitution, before the accusation was heard or suspected; and against the stronger proof resulting from the uniform and collective loyalty of the Dissenters for the preceding Century. If the General Body of Dissenters in the present age should be acquitted of disloyalty, and yet their punishment as disloyal Men should be thought necessary, because the influence of the Ministers alluded to may too probably taint the Dissenters of the next generation with their obnoxious principles, it is impossible to foresee to what intolerable oppression this strange principle may not lead the Legislature. Justice ought to be to States as well as to Individuals, the unchangeable rule of their morality; to inflict hardships on particular classes

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of Men, who have actually done nothing to merit them, is a palpable breach of that rule which the bare possibility of danger from those Men cannot justify. But to treat Men of this age with hardship, on a precarious speculation, that dangers may arise from other Men of the same sect in some future generation, is to combine the utmost injustice with the most manifest impolicy.

Observations like these were ably, though ineffectually urged in favour of the Dissenters, by their magnanimous Advocate on the late motion for the Repeal of the Test Act: But the powerful reasoning urged on that occasion might have received perhaps some additional force, had it been inquired whether the allegations against the accused individuals afford any substantial ground even for their conviction as bad Citizens, on whom the disabilities of the Test Laws might be inflicted, or continued with justice. That this question may be discussed with brevity, I shall confine myself to the consideration of the single case of Dr. Price, whose talents and virtues justly placed him at the head of the Dissenters; but whose character, mild and amiable as it was, could not protect him from the rage of their Accuser, who insulted his feelings with insolent censure, or more insolent commendation; who exhausted all the arts of his false and fraudulent eloquence to render this excellent Man at once odious and despicable; aiming

in his supposed criminality to involve the whole Body of the Dissenters, and ultimately to discredit the cause of Political Reformation, and the Men by whom that cause had been promoted.

It has been alledged, and a deep impression has been made by the allegation, that more dangerous principles of non-conformity have been introduced or revived by Dr. Price, than those which had been the usual grounds of separation assigned by his Predecessors: That his dissent was not merely a dislike of Bishops, or of the Clerical Vestments; a disapprobation of our Liturgy and our Articles of Religion; or a conviction that the imposition of Human Forms, of faith and worship, is inconsistent with the Liberty of Christians and the Divine Authority of the Gospel: That Dr. Price was an adversary to every possible Institution of a National Church: That he aimed to subvert the present, without establishing another Form of Public Religion in its place: That he would disband the National Clergy, abolish every emolument provided for them by the State, and abandon the support of Religion to the voluntary zeal of Men willing, on such terms, to teach or to be taught: That the able Men who concur with him in these sentiments, would too probably succeed in diffusing them through the whole Body of the Dissenters; and that the tendency and final issue of these principles was nothing less than the introduction of anarchy.

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and confusion, the triumph of fanaticism, and the ruin of learning and rational religion.

To this it may be replied, that it is the interest of the Community that a free examination of every Institution should be permitted; and even encouraged; and, consequently, that speculative Men, who may be led in the course of their disquisitions to condemn any Public Establishment, either in part or in whole, ought not to be punished by disgrace or any other penalty whatever.

Establishments, which in one age may have been useful or necessary, in another may have become useless, inconvenient, or pernicious; either the beneficial end for which they were ordained may be more easily attainable without them; or fraud and corruption may have perverted them from their original design to serve an unworthy purpose; and then benefit to a few individuals may be produced, but the Community will be injured. And this is not uncommonly the end, whatever may have been the design of all human Institutions. Government itself, which is formed for the general benefit, is apt to degenerate into tyranny; the Magistrate is intrusted with much power, he grows fond of it, and wishes to usurp more; or, perhaps, he exercises the power he has, not for the common good, but his own separate advantage; in either of these cases it is a work of difficulty, and of danger too, to controul the Magistrate;

Magistrate; and therefore his ambition and his injustice too frequently succeed. And when Men are embodied in any subordinate capacity, they are then apt to be influenced by a Corporation Spirit, which tempts them to prefer the partial interests of that class or profession to which they belong, to the general welfare of their Country. At first the establishment may have been benevolently and wisely planned, and the Public for some time may have reaped advantage from the faithful Administration of its Officers; after that, the primitive zeal is observed to cool; the performance of professional duty becomes irksome, it is gradually relaxed, neglected, and at length wholly abandoned; and yet the emoluments originally annexed to the actual discharge of duty, will frequently be retained, and even increased to the highest amount, when little or no professional duty has been performed. Such is the tendency of human selfishness, under the specious pretext of zeal for the profession; and such the progress of every Institution to a state of extreme abuse, when exempt from controul, and unsubjected to free examination.

It must be admitted, however, that partial evil may sometimes be the consequence of popular controul or free discussion. The just and patriotic Magistrate may be the object of groundless jealousy and distrust; and his power may be reduced within limits too narrow to permit him

him to effect the good he wishes. But this is an evil comparatively of little moment. For it is easy to enlarge his power, when experience has shewn it to be expedient, or to adopt his plans, when discussion has proved their utility. But when the power of popular controul is lost, there are no regular or pacific means left by which the corruptions and oppressions of Government can be checked; the Community then lies prostrate at the feet of Absolute Power; and it will not be long before Absolute Power will have manifested its tiger disposition, and devoured its prey.

Unreasonable prejudice too may attack the most useful Institutions of a subordinate Kind. It may demand the reformation of abuses where none exist; or it may attempt to abolish what ought to be only reformed. But here also, the evils resulting from the abuse of free discussion are evidently inconsiderable, and far out-weighed by the superior advantages of intellectual liberty. There is, indeed, in all controversy, somewhat unpleasant to our feelings; we are apt to be indolent; we are apt to be fastidious; if the subject in debate be trivial and uninteresting, the arguments of the disputer are thrown away, and his wit itself soon grown tiresome. If it be an important subject, we have already perhaps formed our sentiments upon it; we dislike the trouble to review them, and complain that our repose and acquiescence in pre-conceived opinion have

have been disturbed: Men of mild and amiable dispositions are apt to overlook the advantages of discussion, and to lament the heats which are often excited among disputants, and their frequent breaches of candour and charity; while Men of mistaken humility exaggerate the weakness and imperfection of human reason, and bewildered in the mazes of controversy, know not where to turn, or what opinion to adopt, but that discussion is to be shunned as alike to them fruitless and unsatisfactory. But we are not to reject profitable toil, because it is not always attended with pleasure, for that would be extremely unreasonable; nor are we, with mistaken humility, to doom human understanding to rust in perpetual inactivity, for that would be a mischievous and impracticable attempt to thwart the designs of Providence, and stop the improvement of Mankind. Our intellectual faculty, imperfect as it is, was given by God to Man, to be freely exercised, and to be alike the means of happiness to Individuals and to Communities: to suppress or obstruct the free operation of this instrument of our felicity must be in a greater or a less degree disadvantageous; it must have a tendency more or less direct to perpetuate whatever is false in human opinion, by preventing confutation; and to consecrate whatever is useless or pernicious in human Institutions, by teaching us to think of the Works of Man,

Man, as we ought to think of the Works of God alone, that whatever is—is right.

It is true, that in the controversies of speculative Men, and in the struggles of contending Parties, the general opinion is not unfrequently erroneous for some time; because Mankind are liable to be misled by the misstatement of facts, and apt to accept eloquent declamation instead of solid and conclusive reasoning. But it is unquestionable, that what is true or beneficial may be more easily proved to be what it really is, than what is false or pernicious can be proved to be what it really is not. By this single circumstance, a decisive advantage in all polemical struggles is for ever fixed on the side of truth and general utility; and hence, under a just freedom of discussion, that Cause which involves the interest of the Community will be ultimately successful. Sometimes the Adversary of that Cause may combat with a transient superiority; he may possess unusual powers of reasoning; he may cover his fallacies with uncommon art and eloquence; but his triumph will be of short duration, and the mischief done will be of little extent. Genius, equally vigorous, will soon arise to point out and correct his errors; equal powers of eloquence and reason will be exerted to recommend the truth, but with a success more extensive and more lasting.—The Public Mind, having viewed the subject on every side, having seen every fallacy detected, every solid

argument unanswerably maintained, will yield at last to full conviction; and the consequence of the controversy will be the advancement of Human Knowledge, and the augmented happiness of the Community.

To what can we ascribe the gradual improvement of these civilized European Countries from a state of savage barbarism, but to the efforts of Reason; of Reason often exerted against the interests of an injurious Government, in opposition to gross and prevailing prejudice, and in defiance of the sanguinary statutes of an ignorant and intolerant Age? How truly insignificant then are all the partial evils which have arisen from free examination and popular controul, when compared with the mighty benefits which have been obtained by these means, under circumstances very discouraging and very disadvantageous to the exertions of Reason and Public Spirit! And how greatly more might the condition of Mankind be yet improved, in every art, in every virtue which can accommodate or adorn Human Life, if just restraints on the ambition of Government were generally imposed, if the free exercise of Reason were permitted, and disgrace were annexed by the laws to crimes alone.

But of all human Establishments, those which have been formed for the promotion of Religion are perhaps the most liable to great and dangerous abuse. Respecting these Institutions, the
freedom

freedom of speculative Men ought least of all to be confined. From the reverence which is justly paid to the sacred doctrines of Religion, the Priesthood in all Countries have usually acquired a great degree of influence over the National Mind; and the History of Europe in the darker and less inquisitive ages shows, that this influence has been employed to aggrandize the sacerdotal order, to suppress free inquiry, to encourage superstition, and to perpetuate, if that had been possible, the credulity and blind submission of the People, by whom the Clergy had been unwisely elevated to excessive wealth and grandeur. After the revival of letters in the 15th Century, and the consequent diffusion of useful knowledge, a considerable Reformation of Ecclesiastical abuses was soon effected; the doctrines of Christianity were explained in a manner more consonant with common sense, and the riches of the Clergy were reduced within more moderate bounds in England, and in many other parts of Europe. Whether that Reformation of the established Church in England was carried at first as far as it ever ought to be carried; whether the doctrines and the forms of Public Worship in our Church are unexceptionable; whether the power and wealth of our Clergy are conducive to the advancement of piety, or the benefit of the Community; whether the ends of Religion may now, or at some future period, be more completely obtain-

ed, through the diligence of Ministers depending on the voluntary contributions of their respective Congregations, than under the Ministry of an equally learned but less active Clergy, for whom the laws have provided an income independent of their Parishioners; these are questions on which speculative Men should be allowed to differ, and to give a negative to each, without reproach. For it is important to the Community, that on these subjects it should form a just and well considered judgment, not an opinion taken up without examination, on the authority of the Priest, or the Magistrate; because they may have an interest to support abuses, but the Community cannot.

These are at all times proper subjects of discussion; and if in each case, the question should be decided by unbiassed Reason, the honour of Religion, and the welfare of the Public, would not be sacrificed as they often have been to gratify the wishes of the superior Clergy; the correction of abuses, the more successful promotion of piety, justice, and benevolence, would then become the primary objects of attention; and the ease and accommodation of Ministers in the House of Peers would be deemed subordinate considerations.

But when the examination of such questions is prevented by the State, or which is nearly equivalent, when dissent is punished in the sanguinary mode of corporal severities, or discouraged

couraged by legal disgrace and the privation of Civil Rights, the natural consequence of this policy must be a constant accumulation of abuses in the Church, instead of progressive improvement; and the strong and increasing disapprobation of serious Men, instead of that general conformity which a more liberal policy would gradually produce.

But it may be objected, that the principles of toleration here laid down are too extensive to be valid; that they hold out impunity to men of all religions and of *none*; that to tolerate unbelievers of every class is to encourage irreligion; and that the consequence of such improvident encouragement of irreligion, in any Community, must be the final prevalence of Atheism, and the ruin of that sense of Religion by which the crimes of Mankind are chiefly restrained and their miseries consoled. These objections, perhaps, have been sufficiently obviated by the general observations which have been already stated. But since pious men, from such invidious suggestions, may too readily entertain fearful apprehensions of the event, should the principles of unlimited toleration be adopted; it may not be improper to recall to their recollection these unheeded, but important truths; that it is not lawful to use force, or any species of corrupt influence to promote the acceptance of religious truth; that the propagation of Religion by any means, but those of argument and rational conviction,

viction, is contrary to the whole tenor of the Gospel, and the practice of our Divine Master; that, under the Pagan Governments, soon after our Saviour's appearance in the world, popular superstition and philosophic incredulity were equally subdued by the power of reason alone, and Christianity, poor, despised, and persecuted, in a short time became the Religion of the civilised World: while in Christian Countries and in a subsequent age, in which the Public Forms of Religion have not been improved up to the general standard of good sense, and in which the Clergy have become the objects of contempt or envy, for their wealth and power, for their secularity, their disregard of professional duty, and their apparent inutility to the Public, no terrors, no severities of an inquisition, have been able to prevent the growth of irreligion. Penal severities may compel the unbeliever to submit to the Priest's authority: but aversion to a Religion, so propagated, will take a still deeper root in his heart; the spectator of his sufferings will sympathise with him, will be tempted to adopt his resentments, and join in his unbelief. On such occasions it is a reflection which naturally occurs, that force, or fraud, or corruption, must be unnecessary and improper supports of a Religion founded on Divine Authority; and the Church system, which cannot stand without those props, must have been built upon a foundation originally bad, or the superstructure must be in a very

very insecure and a very disgraceful state of dilapidation. From this dilemma, the intolerant Churchman finds it impossible to escape; but it cannot entangle the more consistent Christian, who respects the Rights of Conscience, and who, relying on the Truth and Divine Efficacy of the Gospel, will not consent to dishonour his Religion, by employing fraud, or by accepting the aid of either compulsion or corruption.

In England, unbelievers are certainly liable to penal statutes of great severity; but the Spirit of the Times is more liberal than the Letter of our Laws; the indulgence of Government, and the concurrence of the Public, have reduced to a state of dormancy many of those intolerant statutes which have not yet been repealed. Even the Test Laws, which bear with so much hardship on Christian Dissenters of every sect, are found in practice seldom to exclude from Civil Offices, unbelievers of any denomination. It is notorious, that many of the superior stations of trust and honour are filled by persons who reject Christianity, and who scarcely admit a single article of the Religion of Reason. I cannot commend the laxity of their practice, who thus communicate with a National Church, the most important doctrines of which they wholly disbelieve; nor can I praise the policy of a Legislature, which retains a Test easily eluded by Men of no Religion, and effectual only to exclude those conscientious Christians who scruple to
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concur in some unessential particulars, but embrace the substantial part of the Public Religion. But while Men of capacity for Public Affairs, are to be found among the various tribes of unbelievers, it is an advantage to the Public, that their defective Creed should be no bar to their employment. In the present reign, Hume, Gibbon, Smith, were appointed without scruple to respectable posts in various departments of the State; their appointment was honourable to the liberality of our Government, and they served their Country with the approbation of every candid and equitable Christian. But when a Politician can unite in himself the discordant characters of Bigot and Unbeliever, when he can support by force what he believes to be false; when he can insult the Religion of his Country by profaning its most sacred ceremony in the act of Public Celebration; and yet can exceed the most intolerant Churchman, in zeal, to preserve the statutes of persecution unrepealed; if power should be intrusted to such a Man, it would excite an indignant disapprobation which no professional abilities could diminish. And should he chance to sit upon one of the highest seats of Magistracy, it would only be more necessary, for the sake of injured Freedom and Religion, to brand him as an Oppressor of Men much better than himself: He, a gloomy scorner of Christianity, who supports the established system of superstition, as he deems it,
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with all the terrors of penal severity; they, conscientious Men, who, in some unessential articles, dissent from the Church, but who sincerely embrace the substance of that Religion, which their injurious Persecutor wholly rejects.

If then persons, who dissent fundamentally from the Religion of the Public, ought not to suffer the persecution either of corporal punishment or of legal disgrace, it is surely evident, that persons who agree with the Church in fundamentals, and differ only in some unessential circumstances, ought, with still more reason, to be exempt from all discouragements, either of greater or of less severity. In England, for instance, if the questions should be debated, whether the Church does not need Reformation, in points which respect her discipline or doctrine, the distribution of her revenues, or the political power of her Prelates; why should that Citizen incur disgrace, who reprobates Ecclesiastical Sinécures or the translation of Bishops, and their consequent subjection to the undue influence of the Court, more than he who rescinded sinécures in the State, and attempted to eject the Cornish Burgesses, the Cinque Port Barons, from the House of Commons? Or if any one should hazard an opinion, that Piety and every Christian Virtue might be more effectually taught by Ministers, paid by voluntary contribution, than by a Body of Clergy, entitled by law to tithes and other emoluments, why

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should he not be allowed freely and without reproach to support his speculations; just as another on a different subject, of far inferior, but still of great importance, might, without offence, declare his opinion, that a standing army for the defence of this island is unnecessary, and might be exchanged with advantage for a volunteer militia? That the establishment of a National Church, in any Country, is absolutely necessary for the support of Religion, is a position which cannot be maintained with any colour of reason, because it is contradicted by indisputable facts in ancient and in modern times; by the gradual propagation of Christianity for three centuries after the death of Christ, without the aid of an established Clergy, and by the success which now attends the labours of the Dissenting Ministers, who, like their Predecessors in the primitive ages, devote themselves to the service of Religion, without a prospect of legal provision. That such Institutions are in their nature unlawful, is another position which is equally untenable; because the Jewish Religion affords a direct precedent of a National Church established, as every Christian must admit, by Divine Authority, because the formation of National Christian Churches is not forbidden by the Gospel; and because common consent affords to National Churches, as it does to those which are merely congregational, a similar and a sufficient sanction. But when
dissentions

dissentions have arisen, in any Country, respecting the Religion of the Public; and no assent of the People approaching nearly to general approbation can be supposed, there may then arise questions of expediency, whether an attempt ought to be made to regain that general approbation which has been lost, by reforming the Institutions of the Church, or whether the Establishment itself ought not to be wholly laid aside, and the propagation of Religion to be intrusted to the zeal and assiduity of unendowed Teachers.

On this subject I am free to acknowledge, that my sentiments differ widely from those which have been imputed to Dr. Price. The establishment of a Parochial Clergy, under the superintendence of Episcopal Officers, in the present very imperfect state of knowledge and virtue in the World, appears to be of important use. In England, though many of the Clergy are suffered to hold a plurality of livings, to be even wholly non-resident, and the litigious nature of the provision, to which the law entitles them, often renders those who do not desert their Parochial Duty, incapable of doing the good which otherwise might be expected from them; yet, under these manifest disadvantages, our Parochial Clergy may justly be praised as a very learned and a very useful Body of Men; of whom many, perhaps a majority, are exemplary in the performance of their duty, and successful in promoting good morals and a serious sense of Religion. Even in the most remote and unfre-

quented parts of the Country, good order, decency, and civility, are promoted, in a considerable degree, by their example and influence, in the small districts which are committed to their instruction. And though grave and able Pastors, of the Dissenting Congregations, are supported in a respectable manner by voluntary stipends in many of our rich and populous Towns; I know not any facts from whence it may be collected, that the small and thinly peopled Parishes in the Country would be generally supplied with a set of Ministers as learned and rational as the present, if the establishment of any Parochial Clergy were to be abolished.

But though the opinion of Dr. Price, on this subject, may have been erroneous, yet it was the error of a sincere and generous mind.—Pious, benevolent, and disinterested, he may have thought Mankind more generally influenced by an active zeal for Religion, than experience proves them to be: convinced of the Divine Origin of the Gospel, and its efficacy finally to overcome all opposition, he may have valued too lightly the benefits actually derived from our National Clergy, and the much greater advantages which under a Reformed Establishment would soon be the consequence of their increasing zeal and assiduity: warmed with the contemplation of that state of perfection, to which Mankind are uniformly, though slowly advancing, in which Piety will be found to flourish

flourish without the aid of the Priest, and Justice will be securely relied on without the intervention of the Magistrate, he may have been too ready to conclude that Ecclesiastical Establishments, in every form, are useless at present, and ought to be exchanged for the simple and original mode of Instruction, by voluntary and unendowed Teachers. That we are far distant from that state of general knowledge and virtue, in which it would be expedient to adopt this scheme, is readily allowed. But shall a Man, of great and useful talents, of exemplary piety and virtue, be punished with infamy for speculations like these, which, instead of being derogatory from Religion, manifest the firmest reliance on its Divine Authority; or forfeit his Civil Rights for prematurely proposing schemes of Instruction, which every good Man must wish we were worthy to receive, and which it is the joint aim of Law and Religion to fit us to adopt? If these peculiarities of opinion, which, in fact, have been altogether harmless, are yet in a legal consideration offences against the State for which Dr. Price was justly punishable; what Man of serious thought can be deemed innocent, or in what but abject ignorance, or a servile compliance with Public Opinion, can safety be found? Intolerance has a microscopic eye, which can discover danger or criminality in any speculation on any subject. In her view, whether the subject of disquisition be theological or moral, whether

whether it relate to metaphysics or natural philosophy, freedom of inquiry is always dangerous, and novelty of sentiment is never free from guilt. On such reasons, the disgrace of Price may be approved; and, on similar grounds, Clarke and Hoadly, Newton and Locke, Churchmen, who were the ornaments of their profession; Philosophers, who were the honour of their Country, might have been condemned as Men of dangerous speculation and disturbers of the Public Peace. And thus the Zealots of Church Power, proceeding step by step from one degree of intolerance to another more severe, might justify, by parity of reason, the imprisonment of Galileo at Rome, the legal murder of Servetus at Geneva, the burning of Protestants in London, and the massacre of the Hugonots in Paris.

Such were the barbarities which disgraced our Ancestors in a ferocious age. Under a state of milder manners, we shudder at the mention of them; and the execution of a single Dissident at Smithfield, would now excite general horror, and prove the ruin of our National Church. But though these cruel spectacles are seen among us no more, our eager Churchmen must not flatter themselves that they have ceased to be intolerant. Toleration indeed has long been the maxim of our Civil Government; in the present reign, the severer statutes of persecution have been repealed, or their operation, with

with few exceptions, has been suspended; and if zealous Churchmen had testified no repugnance to the repeal of the Test Laws, it is probable that the conduct of Government, on the late agitation of that question, might have been conformable with their general maxims, and the request of the Dissenters might have been granted by Parliament. But surely little praise is due to the tolerant principles of those Churchmen, who applaud indeed the repeal of those sanguinary statutes, which, from the increased humanity of the age, it was found impossible to execute, but who obstinately insist on retaining those less rigorous Penal Laws, which, punishing Opinion by disgrace and the forfeiture of Civil Rights alone, may still be allowed to operate to a great extent, with no immediate hazard.

To Louis XIV. it seems to have been exclusively reserved, in an enlightened age, to join the extreme of refinement, with that of intolerant severity. His Capital was the residence of science, arts, and learning; his Court was the seat of splendour, elegance, and every voluptuous enjoyment; but his Cabinet was the cell of an Inquisitor. Intoxicated with conquest and unlimited power, this Despot resolved to endure no Religion in France but his own; he revoked the Edict of Nantes; he sent Dragoons into every Province to compel his Protestant Subjects to embrace his Religion, but dissatisfied with
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their success, he sent other Missionaries in this unhallowed work of conversion, to seduce and to win them over by bribes. It is difficult to say, whether the compulsion employed on this occasion was more odious and detestable, or the corruption was more base and despicable. But it is too evident, that so long as our Test Laws shall remain unrepealed, the conduct of our Government will bear a near resemblance to the practice of this superstitious Tyrant in these pecuniary conversions. The mode is somewhat different; the principle and the effect intended are the same.

Our milder system of intolerance indeed disclaims all corporal severities, but it endeavours corruptly to support the Religion of the State; by annexing honours and the emoluments of Civil Office, to the profession of Orthodox Belief. But this species of undue influence is as impolitic and ineffectual for the end proposed, as it is unreasonable and contrary to the purity of the Gospel; it dishonours the Public Religion, and yet it does not diminish the number of Dissenters. On the contrary, the Dissenters have long been a growing Body; and they are now increasing, perhaps, with greater rapidity than in any former period. There are among them Men of great learning and genius, who, to piety and unblemished morals, add an eagerness of zeal against the Established Church; and undoubtedly the present increase of non-conformity, in a considerable

siderable measure, may be imputed to their unwearied exertions. But this is not a circumstance peculiar to the present age. The Dissenters have always had among them able and zealous Men, whose high reputation gave credit to their cause; and whose diligence and assiduity gained Profelytes not merely among persons of the inferior stations, but in a greater proportion, perhaps, among serious Men of liberal education, and of opulent or independent fortunes. This, therefore, cannot be deemed a casual advantage which the Dissenters of this age possess, nor can the gradual increase of their number, during the last century, be accounted for by any accidental or precarious circumstances; it must have arisen from some permanent and powerful cause, which, under the pressure of Penal Statutes, and against the efforts of a numerous and learned Clergy, has operated with constant and increasing success to separate wise and good Men from the Established Church.

It is true, the adherents of the Church of England still form a large majority of the nation; but many nominal Christians and Unbelievers of various sorts are classed among them; and there are many sincere Christians who have expressed, but more, perhaps, who have concealed their disapprobation of the Forms of our Church, and their wishes for a farther Reformation, and yet are not convinced that

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they

they ought to join the Non-Conformists. These considerations seem clearly to prove, that a mitigated intolerance is ill calculated to promote uniformity of Religion, that our Test Laws are unprofitably severe, and that we ought to abandon them for their inefficiency, even if duty did not require us to renounce them as dishonourable to the Gospel, and oppressive to our unoffending Fellow-Citizens. It is surely sufficient, that the inutility of this corrupt system of intolerance has been proved by the experience of a century; it is time that more honourable measures should be tried, that the maxims of impartial justice and equity should more consistently govern the conduct of the State. They are the maxims on which the wealth and tranquillity of nations principally depend; and, weighed against them, the interests and wishes of the superior Clergy ought to be deemed as dust in the balance.

But the too cautious Churchman may here exclaim, that the adoption of these specious principles of universal toleration would not lessen, it would rather aggravate the evils of controversy and dissention; that the Repeal of the Test Laws and the removal of every other penal restraint, which operates as a fence to the Establishment, would open to the Dissenters a prospect of success, which would augment their number with increasing rapidity; and still as their number approached more nearly to that
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of their opponents, those fierce animosities would be more inflamed, which it ought to be our endeavour to cool and compose. And it must be acknowledged, that these apprehensions would be by no means groundless, if, after having annulled every statute of intolerance, from which the Public Religion has hitherto received a disgraceful support, the State should suffer no Reformation in the Discipline, the Revenues, or the Public Forms of our Church. But if the concession of perfect toleration must ultimately conduct us to an Ecclesiastical Reformation, why should that consequence impress the minds of our Legislatures with terror, or excite the opposition of Statesmen, who are friendly to Religion, and who feel the noble ambition to improve their Country. With the superstition of elder times, we have done well to abandon their system of sanguinary persecution: It was a system offensive to humanity, offensive to the free spirit of our Constitution; and the tranquillity which it was calculated to produce was not the acquiescence of men convinced and satisfied, it was the repose of ignorance and blind credulity, the submission of slaves, afraid and often unable to think. If the State stop at this point of incomplete toleration, willing to discontinue corporal severities in support of the Public Religion, but determined to protect the abuses and imperfections of the Church, by disqualification for Civil Office, and the infliction of legal disgrace;

grace; in that case, a state of contention, still increasing in turbulence, seems unavoidable.— The degree of persecution at present employed is sufficient to provoke and exasperate, it is not sufficient to intimidate and suppress the opponents of the Church: By the rigour of a sterner intolerance the inconveniences and the advantages of non-conformity might have been unknown in England, as they are in Spain and Italy; free inquiry might have been stifled, the national system of Religion might have been established on unquestioned authority; and apparent uniformity might have been obtained. On the other hand, by a complete restoration of the rights of conscience, examination would be encouraged, knowledge would become generally diffused: ABUSE and SUPERSTITION would vanish before the increasing light, and mankind would gradually attain the summit of moral dignity, and happiness. But in the policy which we have adopted there is much injustice to no end or purpose; we are intolerant, without obtaining uniformity, or securing the Public tranquillity; and we sustain the mischiefs of dissension and perpetual controversy, without reaping any improvement from free examination.

But let us for a moment suppose, if the supposition will not be too alarming to the timorous Churchman, that the Test Laws have been repealed; that every trace of intolerance has been expunged from our statute-book; and that a Commission

Commission has been issued by due authority to Prelates and Lay Churchmen distinguished for their wisdom and the liberality of their sentiments, requiring them to review the whole system of our religious institutions, and to prepare a plan for its amendment. What measures of Reformation could in all probability be the result of this appointment, which would not be truly beneficial to the Community, and such as ought to be promoted, if there were not a single Dissenter in the Kingdom? Is it a possible consequence of such commission that the Liturgy would be discontinued, and the unpremeditated prayer of the Dissenters would be adopted in its stead? Or that the Liturgy might be continued, and in some parts might remain unaltered; but in many places, by the intermixture of sentiments as disputable as those which would be expunged, would be rendered unacceptable to the great majority of Churchmen?—Judging from the writings of Clarke and Hoadly, Jones and Jortin, Blackburne and Law, or from the known temper and writings of those eminent Churchmen of this age, who probably would compose a part of the Commissioners, and whose sentiments would undoubtedly have great weight with their Lay Colleagues, we may safely pronounce that no such consequence would be possible. It is the sentiment of every liberal Churchman, and it has been often expressed, that the use of a Liturgy ought to be continued, and that our present Liturgy,

turgy, in the main part of it, ought to remain unaltered; but it is their clear conviction also, that the language of dispute should never be heard in our addresses to the Almighty, and therefore our Forms of Public Worship ought to be rendered as nearly as they can be conformable to the practice and phraseology of Scripture; some repetitions, too, they conceive, might be struck out of the Liturgy; some improvements might be introduced in its arrangement; and some verbal and grammatical changes might also be made with obvious advantage. These are alterations which, to be approved, seem to need only to be stated: but rational and worthy men there may be, who, from excess of caution, and unperceived prejudices of various sorts, may not be willing to subject our Public Forms of Worship to that revision and correction which to many appear indispensably necessary; but they will not be found in concert with Enthusiasts, and the more sagacious Hypocrites of Church Power, contending that the Liturgy is too perfect to admit improvement, or denying that the changes suggested would render that venerable composition more free from just objections, more conducive to rational piety, and more effectual to satisfy and unite to the National Church, the generality of serious Christians.

Can it be apprehended that subscription to the present Articles of Religion would be discontinued, only that a new system of Articles as exceptionable,

receptionable, as liable to dispute, might be obtruded in their room? The apprehension is totally groundless; all the most distinguished friends of Ecclesiastical Reformation have uniformly disclaimed and combated the design.—They well know that to substitute new unscriptural articles for the old would be to change the subjects of dispute, or to vary their position, but not to lessen the violence of disputation, or to consult the honour of our Religion. They have generally declared their opinion that subscription to any system of human articles is improper; but if that form or practice were dispensed with, they could be well content, I am persuaded, that the Thirty-nine Articles should remain in the Book of Common Prayer as a monument of the theological opinions adopted by the Anglican Church in former ages, and a standard from which it has not thought fit to deviate in the present.

Can it be seriously thought, that the measures of the Commission, here supposed, would tend to unnerve and relax the discipline of the Church? or to impair the dignity of the Bishops, or in any degree to lessen the general income of the Church? The apprehension of such consequences is too improbable; it is plainly an imaginary fear.—With respect to discipline, the direct reverse of relaxation would be the certain effect of a farther Reformation of our Church. There are perhaps no abuses which have been
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carried to so great excess, in the Church of England, none which have had so fatal influence on the morals and piety of the People, or which have excited such just and general complaints, as the Non-Residence of the Clergy, and their frequent possession of a plurality of Livings. Whenever our Ecclesiastical system shall undergo a serious review, those abuses will undoubtedly receive due correction : and if the Bishops possess not sufficient authority to compel the habitual residence of the Parochial Clergy, and to prevent any plurality of Livings, as the law now stands ; such authority ought to be given to them, and the most effectual means ought to be provided, for securing the due execution of any new law which might be passed, to prevent such enormous abuses in future.

With respect to the dignity of the Bishops and the general Revenues of the Church, the sentiments of a Patriotic Bishop have been explained with his usual energy and intrepidity ; and apparently, with the general approbation of those Churchmen, who deem a Reformation of the Church expedient. If the advice of this distinguished Prelate were taken upon this subject, is it probable that he would recommend a diminution of the authority of the Bishops over the Parochial Clergy ; or propose their degradation from their seats in Parliament ? Nothing like either of these measures can be supposed ; the worthy Prelate certainly has no such design ; his advice
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has already been offered to the Episcopal Bench, and had it been accepted by his Right Reverend Brethren, perhaps the true interests of the Church of England would have been better consulted. For it cannot be dissembled, that a general suspicion at present prevails, that our Spiritual Lords are frequently and unduly influenced in their Parliamentary conduct by the hope of translation. It is evident therefore that a prohibition of the future translation of Bishops, and as the Episcopal Sees become vacant a gradual equalization of their revenues, would tend to re-establish the dignity and proper influence of the Episcopal character.

And if from funds which are neither difficult to be pointed out, nor improper to be thus employed, means were adopted to augment the small benefices of our Church, to such extent that each benefice would be a decent provision for the maintenance of a resident Clergyman; who could then complain of a strict execution of the laws against Non-Residence, or who could think that such a distribution of the Church Revenues, as that here alluded to, would not tend to the advancement of Religion, and the general satisfaction of the Parochial Clergy?

The last subject of complaint respecting our Ecclesiastical Institutions, viz. that of Tithes, shall be briefly noticed. This mode of providing by tithes for the Parochial Clergy, is often attended with great vexation to those who re-

ceive and to those who pay those dues, and it manifestly tends to obstruct and defeat the endeavours of the Parochial Clergy to be useful in their respective stations. Whenever our Church System, therefore, shall undergo a revision, it is not improbable that this inconvenient kind of provision for the Clergy will be changed for another that is more unexceptionable. And if a valuation of the Tithes, payable to the Clergy throughout England, were made under due authority, on an average of their value for the three last years, and the average price of wheat for the same term were settled in a similar manner, it appears that a full and proper equivalent for the Tithes to be abolished might be obtained for each Incumbent, in the shape of Corn-Rents, payable out of those lands which are now charged with the payment of Tithes; the Corn-Rents to be levied as the Poor's Rates are collected, but by a separate assessment; and the quarterly payment of these rents in four equal sums to be enforced in the same summary manner. By such regulations a provision for the support of the Parochial Clergy would be established, which would be adequate, permanent, and not liable to sink or rise with every fluctuation in the price of money: and thus the strife and litigation which too frequently arise between the Pastors and their Parishioners, respecting their present dues, would be totally extinguished; they would learn to consider each other as friends, whose interest

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was always the same; mutual good-will and harmony would subsist between them with fewer interruptions; and the great business of Religion would be more successfully advanced. In a political view, the benefits of the change, as tending to promote a more skilful and extensive cultivation of the ground and an increase of population, are too apparent to need any illustration.

A Reformation of our Church, effected on these principles of moderation and mutual forbearance, would neither condemn any man's tenets nor impose them on others, it would not alter the standard of our Religious Opinions, nor vary the general tenor of Public Worship, it would not tend to unhinge the Constitution, by weakening the just authority of the Aristocracy; it would have a different consequence; by purifying the hierarchical part of it, and removing those suspicions of undue influence which now discredit the Episcopal Bench, it would tend to fortify the Constitution, and add fresh reputation to the House of Lords. It would not affect the property of any Churchman now possessing benefices; it would establish the proposed alterations in the distribution of the Revenues of the Church gradually, and as vacancies might be opened by death or promotion. And having fixed for the Parish Clergy a mode of provision, which would be adequate, permanent, and free from that frequent litigation to which their present property is subject: and having also secured

their habitual residence in their respective parishes; it would at once promote the comfort of the Clergy and their People; and at the same time advance the interests of Religion and the political welfare of the State.

That an Ecclesiastical Reformation, conducted on these principles, and to this extent, would satisfy all who are now dissatisfied within the Church and without it, I am far from meaning to assert—for no possible measure of human power and wisdom could produce that miraculous effect; but it would satisfy many wise and conscientious Churchmen; it would reconcile many rational and moderate Dissenters; it would tend greatly to prevent the future defection of Good Men from the National Church; and if some Able Men should still continue to think their mode of instruction by Unendowed Teachers of Religion, not only preferable to the Public System, but alone unexceptionably proper, and fit in these times to be adopted, still I am persuaded they would rejoice to behold the Cause of Religion promoted more successfully by the National Clergy, under these regulations of the Church, although the diligence and success of the Clergy might possibly for a time reduce their notion of the impropriety of any Public Establishments of Religion to an un consequential singularity of opinion.

It will be objected, undoubtedly, that INNOVATIONS are dangerous, for this has been the perpetual

perpetual obstacle to every improvement ; and if the objection had not been very frequently over-ruled, Mankind, instead of enjoying the comforts of civilized life, and attaining the dignity of rational and religious Agents, must have continued still in their savage state, wandering among the woods as wild as the beasts with whom they were surrounded. The alleged danger of Innovation, therefore, when destitute of any apparent probability from the circumstances of the change proposed, can only be deemed the vague surmise of an imaginary fear, the contempt of wise men, and the bugbear of fools alone.

But it will be observed, that Innovations in matters appertaining to Religion are always attended with peculiar danger ; and that, in fact, few instances have occurred of a considerable change effected in the Religion of any Country, without producing Commotion, and even Revolution in the State. If this is a valid objection to any improvement in our Religious Institutions at present, it was a valid objection in the days of Luther, and in the earlier ages of Christianity. Many persecutions and many calamitous vicissitudes of fortune were endured by the Primitive Christians, for three centuries before their Religion became the Established Faith of the Roman Empire ; and in modern times, the Reformation of the Abuses of the Church of Rome convulsed all Europe for ages.

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But each of these Innovations, so highly beneficial to Mankind, was fatal to the ancient Religion of those respective ages. Long-established practices were condemned, deep-rooted prejudices were reprobated by the first Preachers of the Gospel, and their successors, the Ministers of Protestantism. After a long and violent struggle, Paganism first, and Popery afterwards, were vanquished by the Religion of the Bible; and the successful Innovators, in each instance, took possession of those Temples from which, by the force of reason and argument, they had driven their Adversaries.

But no similar events are now to be apprehended from the proposed Reformation of the Church of England. The improvements suggested, as they would be beyond comparison less beneficial than the two great Innovations just mentioned, so they would be less hostile to the ancient system which they are calculated not to destroy but to reform. The changes are proposed not by the Adversaries of the Church, but by Churchmen, jealous of her honour, and anxious for her welfare; and if acceded to, they would be not the humiliating terms imposed by a victorious foe, but wise and seasonable concessions, adopted at the recommendation of friends, for the sake of general conciliation.—The propositions contain nothing harsh, or exclusive; nothing injurious to the present Clergy, or tending to alter the Form of Government
either

either in Church or State: If there is candour, equity, or prudence, in the great Body of our Churchmen, a Reformation thus adopted, to heal divisions, and to comprehend and unite in one Society, Christians of various unessential opinions, could produce nothing like Commotion or Revolution; in a political view it would be a harmless, pacific, and even an advantageous change; and its consequences respecting Morals and Religion would be truly salutary to the Community.

On this brief consideration of the first part of my subject, it seems evident that no peculiarity of Religious Opinion which Dr. Price had, or could have adopted, ought to have excluded him from the Common Rights of Citizens, or subjected him to any legal reproach; and that from the repeal of those statutes, under which such worthy Men have long endured unmerited disgrace, no consequence with any appearance of probability can be expected to result, which would not be conducive to piety and virtue, and alike beneficial to the State and to the National Church. Let us proceed to consider his political heresies, as by some they are thought; and to inquire whether in this view of his character, he were not equally capable of exculpation, and ought not to have received the same complete absolution.

It is true, that Dr. Price did not scruple to declare his opinion, that the Constitution of
England

England is deformed by many abuses; that the People are mocked with a mere shadow of Representation; that the House of Commons is sunk in the grossest corruption. He was among the foremost to convey these sentiments to the Public, in warm and indignant language; and his strenuous zeal contributed greatly to animate the Popular Meetings, and encourage their resolution to attempt the Reformation of Parliament. If these were errors of a pernicious tendency, and proofs of a seditious turbulence of disposition, some of the best and wisest Men of this Country, as they have usually been esteemed, have fallen into the same errors, and have manifested a similar disposition. Of the distinguished senators alluded to, the name of one only shall be produced; but that a name which the accuser of Price once highly respected. If his sentiments of Sir George Savile have been changed, the impartial public has not ceased to revere him as a patriot of more unfulfilled honour than any other perhaps in the annals of England. —It was his aim, indisputably, not to destroy the Constitution, but to remove its abuses, to correct its imperfections, and thus to augment the happiness of millions who live under its protection. Will candour then, or will justice, permit us to suppose, that Price did not act with the same benevolent view? Or are sentiments and conduct, which are innocent, and even laudable, in Savile, seditious and criminal

minal when adopted by Price?—Respecting the corruption of Parliament, and the decayed state of our Constitution, their opinions, their language, and their conduct were similar. With the reputation of Price, as a Political Reformer, that of Savile is intimately connected. Calumny may wish to separate the Philosopher, whom she hates, from the Patriot whom she would fear directly to attack. But she cannot disunite these excellent Citizens, and present them in a different point of view; she is unable to select the object of her malice, and shoot her envenomed arrow at him, without hazard to the other; the shaft which wounds the reputation of Price, must injure the fame of Savile; and when our incomparable Patriot receives the praise which his Benevolence and Public Spirit justly deserve, Price must be intitled to share the commendation with him.

But I shall not content myself with having sheltered the Political conduct of Dr. Price, under the example of Sir George Savile; his exertions to promote the Restoration of our Constitution, may be defended in a way that is more becoming the dignity of his much injured character. Let it be considered then, that men do not attempt to correct and improve what they wish to destroy; that a strong disapprobation of a body of National Representatives returned by the little, venal, and enslaved Boroughs, and the corrupt and factious state

Parliament which is the necessary consequence, may well consist with a decided approbation of the general frame of our Government; that he best proves his attachment to the Constitution, not who defends with blind or selfish zeal every defect which time, or fraud, or misguided authority may have introduced; but he who wishes to preserve the ancient foundations untouched, and the general plan unaltered; yet endeavours to remove the blemishes which disgrace the venerable structure; to repair what age has injured, to supply what experience has proved to be deficient; and to compel the subtle thief, or more audacious robber, to restore what each may have purloined or plundered; that the strength and beauty of the Fabric may thus be completed. And when this is done, or attempted in a regular way, by means unexceptionably legal, it is not on such ground, that the charge of disloyalty or sedition can be supported.

But Dr. Price admired the Constitution of the American Republic, and exulted at the success of the French Revolution; and from these admitted facts it was inferred, and pressed with the utmost oratorical vehemence, that he was criminally partial to the Governments of France and America, that he was hostile to the Constitution of England, that he aimed at the introduction of a Republic in this Country, that he was a bad Man, a bad Citizen, and a dangerous Innovator, and justly merited the joint punishment of private

vate censure and that legal disgrace which the laws already had inflicted upon him.

Such was the thin disguise assumed by spiritual persecution; such the poor pretence thrown over the real wish of the Enemies of Liberty to introduce or extend a system of political intolerance, which happily is at present little, if at all, known among us. But surely it is an artifice unworthy that plain sincerity which best becomes the Legislature of a great Country to establish, or preserve a Religious Test, not with a view to repress any particular sect or doctrine of Religion, but indirectly to discourage some offensive peculiarity of political opinion. The rule from which a Legislature should never depart, is to adopt no purpose which is unfit to be avowed, and having adopted fit purposes, to pursue them by plain and direct methods. To support the Sacramental Test, because it is conceived to be a convenient instrument to prevent the growth of Republican Principles, is to authorise Intolerance in the Church, that the Civil Government may be enabled, at the same time, to practice indirectly that political Intolerance which the law does not directly admit; it is to establish a profanation of a Holy Rite of Religion, ostensibly to give the National Religion an unwarrantable support, but, in fact, to discourage political speculation, and to maintain the Constitution by means which it disclaims, by cunning, indirect and injurious methods,

by the oppression of real innocence, and the punishment of a factitious offence, which the Legislature has not thought fit specifically, and with due precision, to define.

It has been already proved, that no limitation on the exercise of our rational faculties can be beneficial to mankind; that political speculation as well as religious disquisition ought to be perfectly unrestrained; that free examination alone can check the growth of abuses, either in those Institutions which are of the highest importance, or in those which are of a subordinate rank, and that alone can secure to Society the progressive improvement in all its establishments of which it is capable, from the increasing exertions of industry, the more general diffusion of property, and the gradual advancement of the human character, in knowledge, in civility, in the love of order, justice, and rational liberty. Fortunately for this Country, the State has been less jealous than the Church; and, though restraints have been unjustly imposed on religious disquisition, the right of political speculation remains in a great measure unabridged. In this respect, the Test Laws operate only incidentally, and as it were by chance; and the laws enacted to support the exclusion of the Stuart Family from the Throne of England, can produce their effect only on those Men who, with Mr. Burke, deny the power of Parliament as the Agents of the Nation, to regulate, or in any manner to alter,
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the succession to the Throne. But questions have arisen, whether the House of Commons is a fair Representative of the People; whether the House of Peers might not better answer the purpose of its Institution, if no translation of Bishops were allowed; whether the influence of the Crown is not too great, even after all the reductions which it has undergone since the close of Lord North's Administration. On these subjects, I apprehend that there is no existing law according to which in its plain and direct meaning the most eccentric opinion can be punished.

These are subjects on which discussion is understood to be free, and some of the wisest Men this Country ever produced, in all these respects, have pronounced our Constitution faulty. That in them all it is faulty, in some degree, is perhaps indisputable; but to what extent of danger these abuses expose the Community, opinions may vary: whether the Constitution ought to undergo a more or a less extensive Reformation, whether it ought, with all its imperfections, to be supported and to remain wholly unreformed, or the political structure is too far decayed to admit repair, and ought to be taken down and modelled anew; these are questions which seem to be left open to the discretion of each Disquisitor; respecting them no line has been plainly drawn by the laws, beyond which political criticism shall not be allowed to pass,
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nor has any clear criterion been fixed, by which the zeal of Public Spirit may be distinguished, in a legal view, from the temerity of rash Innovation. It would indeed be difficult, if not impossible, by any previous definition, to ascertain the limits within which speculation on constitutional subjects ought to be confined; the restriction would be alike contradictory to the principles of the Constitution, and incompatible with the interests of the Community.

Political Bigots, however, and Impostors in the State, like those in the Church, may wish to suppress this freedom of disquisition; and to obtain a new, or a more extensive code of political persecution. But the temper of the times is adverse to every species of Intolerance; and aristocratical Men must despair to effect that extension in any direction. And yet, as opportunity offers, they seem not unwilling to hazard the most unusual stretches of Parliamentary Power, to punish the expression of bold but undeniable truths. When a Petition was presented, in the last Session, to the House of Commons, complaining of great abuses in the late election for Westminster, almost in the very terms used by Sir George Savile, on the general subject of our *Septennial Fairs or Markets*, in his Address to his Constituents, the unwelcome truths grated on the ear of Parliament, and hardly could the rage of some hot Men be kept within any bounds of prudence by the two wisest Members of that
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Assembly. But for their judicious interposition, a few truths strongly expressed, and somewhat too bluntly addressed to Parliament, by the hasty resentment of some intemperate Men, might have been productive of the most pernicious consequences.

But a foreigner, by his repeated attacks upon our Constitution, has given more serious occasion to Government, to exercise their disposition to forbearance. I trust they have resolved to pass by the Author of the book alluded to without any legal animadversion; for in such cases, legal animadversion must be unsafe, or it must be unnecessary.

If the Rights of Man had been a book feebly written, it would be folly, for it is needless to insist on any stronger objection, to drag the Author and his impotent malice into general notice by prosecution. But it is a book ably and forcibly written, though neither with candour nor wisdom. In that piece, Mr. Paine attempts to depreciate the Constitution, or as he chuses to term it the Government of England, by painting its inconveniences and defects in the strongest colours, while its present advantages, and the capability of its receiving, in a safe and regular manner, the highest future improvements, are artfully thrown out of sight: He supports the doctrine of Republicanism with an enthusiastic zeal, with an imposing confidence, and with reasoning often specious, and always daring; some truths

truths are interspersed among many fallacies and misrepresentations; and a vein of coarse but strongly sarcastic wit runs through and clumsily enlivens the whole. His counsel, to break up and destroy the noble fabric of our Constitution, and rebuild a new political edifice on the plans of America, seems to be conveyed in the most dangerous shape, and far more likely to make an impression on those to whom it is chiefly addressed, than if it had been delivered in a more classical composition, in which more attention had been employed to avoid the grossness of indecent language, and more solicitude displayed to shun whatever might tend to excite the lowest classes of the People to acts of violence and injustice. But mischievous as the effects of that book may be, they cannot be stopped by prosecution; the attempt would only aggravate the danger. If no law has been provided by the Legislature for the direct and immediate purpose of protecting by penal sanctions, the general principles of our Constitution; no attempt, by any forced constructions of law to punish the Adversary of our Constitution, can be with reason apprehended from the virtue and wisdom of those Men who compose a majority of the Cabinet. But if any penal statute actually does exist according to the direct meaning of which, though hitherto misunderstood, his virulent cavils, at the frame of our Government, can be considered as crimes, and the Caviller himself
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be subjected to punishment, it appears that such a law would be much more fit to be repealed than to be executed. For the right of intellectual freedom ought not to be violated, to prevent any occasional inconvenience from the abusive exercise of that right; the violation is always odious, and in the present instance would be very impolitic.—Intolerance in the State, like persecution in the Church, would dishonour and weaken what it was designed to support.—The People cannot be compelled to love the Constitution; that affection must be voluntary, or it will not be felt; and it can only be generally felt, where happiness is generally and securely enjoyed. During the miseries of the American War no symptom of disaffection to the Constitution appeared; and the bulk of the English Nation remains still strongly attached to it. The Proselytes to Republican notions are few at present, and inconsiderable: they probably would be increased in number by prosecution; but by impunity a wise forbearance will effectually prevent any eventual danger from their speculations, provided the condition of the People be rendered more easy by the farther diminution of their burthens, and their wishes be gratified by a timely correction of those abuses in the Constitution which have been so justly complained of. By these means, and by these means alone, the possible growth of a great Republican Party in this Country may be prevented; and

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those seeds of dissention, which have been so widely disseminated, may be trampled under foot with contempt and abhorrence, by a contented and happy People.

To the most sincere Friends of Public Freedom in this Country, the counsel of Mr. Paine appears ill-timed, impracticable, undesirable for England, and more likely to retard than to accelerate the recovery of our just rights; and the most judicious Supporters of French Liberty deem his advice not less unseasonable for France, where it is fitted to obstruct the settlement of the Country and to prevent the secure enjoyment of Liberty, under that free Constitution which the National Assembly, with so much difficulty and hazard, and by such uncommon exertions of public spirit and political wisdom, had achieved for the French nation.

If, therefore, Dr. Price had concurred with Mr. Paine, in his wild project for the universal establishment of Republican Forms of Government; if he had asserted with him, that the English Nation has *NO CONSTITUTION*, and had proposed an attempt not to restore but to subvert what we call our Constitution, that, after the example of America, a *NEW* Republic might be built on the ruins of our ancient Form of Government: I must frankly own his character would have been undefended, and his memory unhonoured by me, I should not have questioned his *proud integrity*; I should have
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thought him unconscious of the mischief and misery he was promoting; I should have considered him an honest Enthusiast, whose imagination had been heated by the contemplation of great Revolutions; as that of Mr. Paine may have been inflamed with extraordinary fervor, by his having been an actor in the Revolution of America. But I am aware that an honest Enthusiast may be a dangerous Politician; that he may propose projects replete with mischief and ruin, and equally fatal to himself and to his followers; to the Community, and to the Cause of Liberty, which he means to serve.

But Dr. Price was a Patriot of a different class; though perfectly disinterested, he was not an enthusiastic Politician; though active and public-spirited, he was cool and rational; though strongly attached to Liberty, he was prudent, and cautious to avoid unnecessary danger,—not to himself, but to the Public. When he considered the state of England, he beheld an excellent Constitution disgraced by corruptions of every sort; but he saw too, that something more was left to the People than the bare right to petition the Legislature; that the mass of the Community was yet untainted by Corruption, and zealous for Liberty; that in many districts the just power of the Constituent Body, to controul their Representatives, was still preserved entire; while some of the Peers, and many even of those Members of the House of Commons, whose title to sit in

that Assembly is unconstitutional, displayed a generous zeal to destroy abuse and usurpation, and restore to the People their ancient Constitutional Right. In these circumstances, he saw, with other Friends to Reformation, no reason to despair that a restoration of our ancient right of a full and fair Representation, with triennial or even annual elections, might be gradually recovered for the nation by legal and pacific means. —As on the one hand, therefore, he scorned meanly to cheat his Countrymen by adulating their prejudices, concealing the faults and abuses of the Constitution, and endeavouring to lull them into a false security, that would have been fatal to their freedom; so on the other hand, perceiving that no necessity for great hazards existed; that the alternative offered to us was, not what was presented to the French and American Nations, whether Slavery or a New Constitution was to be chosen; but whether a Civil War, for the chance of a Republic, was to be preferred to the gradual melioration of our mixed form of Government by peaceful means; he wisely preferred safe and progressive improvement to the doubtful event of great but hazardous Revolution.

And when the Men, who promoted a Reformation of the Constitution, were unfortunately divided into two distinct parties, one of which adopted that more moderate plan of improvements, which Mr. Pitt afterwards endeavoured

deavoured to establish, and the other, espousing a more extensive system of Reformation endeavoured to restore the right of universal suffrage, the support of Dr. Price was uniformly and from an early period given to the more moderate propositions. It is impossible, with the least appearance of equity and reason, to impute to the Duke of Richmond, and other Gentlemen who promoted the more extensive plan, any undue partiality to Republican schemes of Government: but it is not less evidently contrary to candour and justice, to charge that improper predilection on Men, whose influence in times of much discontent was constantly employed to recommend to the People those less extensive demands, which appeared more likely to be attained by regular and pacific means.

About the same time, when the attempt to seize the Charter of the East-India Company, and to vest in a Body of Commissioners the whole civil, military, and commercial Patronage of the Company, with an unlimited command of the Treasury of Bengal, had excited a general apprehension of danger to the Constitution, the English Reformers, with few exceptions, exerted the utmost zeal to preserve the just Prerogative of the Crown. Whether this alarm were ill-founded, or otherwise, is not the question before us; it is sufficient to observe, that the avowed motive for a vigorous opposition to that measure by the Associations, and parti-

particularly by the general Body of the Dissenters, with whom Dr. Price, on this occasion, certainly concurred in sentiment, was their conviction, that the principles of our limited Monarchy were endangered and ought to be supported. It is unreasonable, it is unjust, to condemn such Men as disloyal Citizens, from a detached phrase in a speculative Work, from an accidental expression of fervor at a convivial Meeting, against the testimony of their general conduct, and many practical proofs of their sincere and settled wish, not to subvert but to restore the Constitution.

Considered by this candid rule, which is almost always the reasonable and the just rule of Judgment, the conduct of Dr. Price respecting the Revolution in France is free from objection. His exultation on the establishment of French Liberty, was expressed in unison with the general joy of his Countrymen; who without any invidious reference to the Constitution of England, or any wish to adopt the peculiarities of the New Constitution of France, rejoiced with him that the millions of men who had been Slaves in that Country, had regained **THEIR NATURAL RIGHT TO BE FREE.** And surely it is no extravagant compliment to his Political Judgment, to believe that although he approved the full Representation of the People in a single Chamber in that Country; in which no hereditary Chamber of Nobles ever had been known; yet he totally disapproved any design to copy
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that example in England; where an hereditary Peerage has been established from a very early period of our Government; and where it is sufficiently evident that in the present circumstances of the Country, such a change in our Legislature would be at once impracticable and undesirable.

And with respect to the American Republic, he may have thought very consistently that it was a Form of Government admirably adapted to the circumstances of that Country at the time when the Revolution was effected, and yet very unfit to be introduced in this Country, which is in many important respects circumstanced in a manner that is widely different.— He may have contemplated with pleasure that equality in the distribution of property which has happily taken place in America, and the consequent equality of ranks and privileges which the Citizens there enjoy; he may have expressed a mixed surprise and approbation of the humble port of Government in that Country, and the cheap expence at which it is supported, when compared with the lofty and expensive grandeur of our European Courts; and yet on considering his general conduct, no reason may be found to doubt that he approved the Monarchical part of our Government; and even applauded the conduct of the other great and enlightened Nation of Europe, when with consummate prudence in the moment of emancipa-
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tion they resolved still to retain the Monarchy of France.

But Dr. Price deemed the condition of the Citizens of America preferable to that of the subjects of Great-Britain. And who that is a capable Judge will deny it? By the generous treatment of Great Britain for ages before the unhappy quarrel, the inhabitants of America had been enabled to place themselves in a situation more fortunate perhaps than that of any other Nation in the World. They now enjoy the benefits of Civilized Society, without its corruptions; they have the advantage of an equal distribution of property, without the usual Licence and tumult of Democratic States: for a population increasing with a rapidity unprecedented in any other Country they have an extent of territory amply adequate for ages to come; almost totally exempt from taxes they support their Government with the frugality of a little Swiss Republic, and yet have acquired the weight and consequence of a considerable State, soon to rank on a footing of equality with the first Empires in the World. But could Britain attain that enviable degree of happiness, merely by adopting the American Form of Government? No, certainly: Were this adoption practicable, which undoubtedly it is not, yet unless a similarity in all the other circumstances could be obtained, a similar Form of Government would not confer equal happiness; it is much more probable

ble that it would create greater inconveniences than those which are at present complained of. But though this probably was the opinion of Dr. Price, yet, when he surveyed the different circumstances in each Country, and the different Governments corresponding with these circumstances which had been established in America and Britain, and compared the degree of felicity, which, under these dissimilar Institutions, was enjoyed in each Community respectively, he weighed their merits with the impartiality of a Philosopher, and gave superior praise where superior happiness was found to be produced. Is this a liberty of speculation not to be endured in England? It is not a greater liberty than has been allowed in France, before the Revolution, under a Government then thought less indulgent than our own.

The Accuser of Price extols, with justice, the political writings of Montesquieu; and cites, with peculiar applause, his enthusiastic praises of the Constitution of England. And yet let me ask, by what slavish adherent of Despotism, in France, has Montesquieu been censured, for this partiality to our limited Monarchy, as an evil subject, and disaffected to that absolute Government under which he dared to avow these generous sentiments? Or what good reason can be given, why the venerable Price should not be treated with equal candour and respect as Montesquieu himself? What has the English Di-

vine done, more than the French Lawyer, for which he ought to be degraded from the class of those true Patriots, who have laboured at once to promote the liberties and to preserve the peace of their Country? Montesquieu saw that the introduction of Political Liberty into France, in his time, was impossible. He submitted to the mild and mitigated Despotism of Louis XV. but he taught his Countrymen those lessons of Public Freedom and Happiness, which gradually prepared them, in the next age, to overthrow their despotic Government, and to establish a system of Political Liberty under a limited Monarch. Price saw the happier state of Mankind in those Countries, where simple manners and a general equality of property admitted a Republican Form of Government; but he knew that, in his time, the Establishment of a Republic in England was impracticable, that it was a mode of Government unsuitable to the very unequal distribution of our property, contrary to the general sentiments of the nation, and ill-adapted to conduct the political business of our widely extended Empire. In these circumstances he did what a wise and good Man ought to have done; he owned the superior happiness enjoyed under the more popular and less expensive Government of America; but he zealously promoted that moderate correction of abuses, in the frame and duration of our Parliaments, which alone can prevent future convulsions

convulsions in England, and perpetuate our present form of limited Monarchy.

In his preface to the *Spirit of Laws*, Montesquieu says, "Plato thanked Heaven that he was born in the same age with Socrates; and I thank Heaven that I was born a subject of the Government of France." Dr. Price might have adopted similar language in England: He did more; he acted up to the sentiment which it expresses. In the year 1780, he was invited by the Congress to go over to America; he was requested to accept a principal Office in the State, and to lend his assistance in the establishment of a new system of Finance, to support the Government of the United States; yet, thus honourably requested to become a Citizen, and in some measure the Legislator of the American Republic, he refused to quit his native Country, and determined to live and die a subject of the Monarchy of England.

Whence then, it may be asked, has sprung that torrent of foul reproach, which has been poured on the head of this amiable and disinterested Reformer, and on whole Societies of Men with whom he had united in the generous pursuit of Political Reformation. What could provoke such fierce animosity, such insatiable malevolence; far exceeding the utmost rancour of opposition, which the Associations experienced during the period of their greatest activity? Personal enmity, disappointed ambition, the loss of popularity,

popularity, and the despair to recover it, each of these circumstances may have prompted a mind naturally irritable, to an attack on a distinguished Leader of the Popular Party; whose principles Mr. Burke certainly never approved, and by whose opposition his scheme of power had been not long before defeated. But somewhat more than these combined causes seems still to be wanting to account for these extreme hostilities.

After Mr. Pitt's motion, in the year 1785, to amend the Representation of the People in Parliament, had been rejected by the joint efforts of the Aristocracy, they seem to have thought the danger which had threatened their ill-acquired power in the Boroughs was at an end; that the People who had not supported with sufficient vigour the attempt to restore the Constitution, when the fatal effects of Corruption and Aristocratical Usurpation had been recently felt, would be lulled by the usual effects of Peace into a total neglect of their Constitutional Rights, till, by their continued acquiescence, those abuses would be confirmed by a prescriptive authority, which would continually gain new strength, and which no future effort of the People would be able to overcome.

But in these flattering expectations the Aristocracy were much mistaken. The Associated Bodies, though unsuccessful in 1785, were not dispirited by their defeat. Their Principles of Reformation

Reformation had been adopted by a Minister who had obtained the confidence of his Country, and to whom the friends of the Association were justly attached with peculiar warmth. On these Principles, a comprehensive plan for amending the system of our Representation had been formed and proposed to Parliament, with every advantage which the zeal and eloquence of that Minister could bestow. Repulsed as he was by the Commons, it was then evident that he had not wholly miscarried. His plan was approved, though not adopted; it was allowed that it would form a much better system of Representation than the present; and though Parliament had negatived the motion by a great majority, yet the measure appeared to be rather postponed than rejected by the public.

The popular Agents were not then stunned and astonished by the blow they had received, they did not then despair of final success. They knew their plan to be moderate, they felt it to be important, and they trusted, that a short time would show that the Rights and true Interests of the People were better understood; that the extent and danger of Election abuses and Parliamentary Corruption were more clearly discerned; and the importance and necessity of a Public Reformation were more generally felt by the Community. And these expectations have not been wholly disappointed. Since that period, the Associations have been reinforced by the
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accession of many public-spirited and able men; and new Associations on similar grounds have been formed in different parts of the kingdom. Even in this indolent time of Peace, the spirit of Reformation for some years has been manifestly rising; and if the popular Party should fortunately add prudence equal to their increasing zeal, should endeavour to profit by their past mistakes, and avoid divisions by firmly adhering to temperate propositions, it seems probable that a substantial Reformation of Parliament with every public blessing in its train may be accomplished soon, by pacific means, and in the regular course of Parliamentary business.

It was impossible that a jealous Aristocracy could be inattentive spectators of this alteration in the mind of the Public. Undoubtedly, they have watched the progress of the spirit of Reformation with much and increasing anxiety. At first, their fears for those abuses in the Boroughs to which they owe their unconstitutional power, were not excited in any great degree; but at the nearer approach of danger, their apprehensions grew more serious; and what was aversion to the popular Cause before, was soon improved into keen and violent hatred. At last, the establishment of a Legislative Assembly in France on equitable principles of Representation, the exultation expressed by the People here, on the successful efforts which had been exerted to emancipate the French nation; and the appa-
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rent ease with which a transition might be made in this Country, from admiring their Form of Representation to improving our own, these united circumstances pushed their panic to its present extremity. From that moment, their animosity no longer has known any bounds of justice, moderation, or prudence; the PEOPLE and their just Constitutional claims have been the constant objects of their unqualified scorn and derision, their unmitigated abhorrence and execration: and still in each wild and moody change of temper, these alternate excesses of rage and ridicule, of horror and contempt, have been but the varied expressions of their FEAR.

But there was method in their madness, and even their terror was not without art and cunning. It was well imagined, though the idea wants the merit of originality, that the spirit of Bigotry might be opposed with success to the spirit of Liberty; and that an attack upon our Political Reformers ought to begin with the Dissenters and to be chiefly pointed against them; not because they are more vulnerable in any part of their Public conduct than their Associates; but because against them it would be easy to revive ancient jealousies, which for some time had appeared nearly extinct; to rouse the fears of Churchmen for the safety of the Bishops, and the established Religion; and by inlisting that powerful body of men against the Promoters of Political Reformation to secure for one age at least, the

the defeat of their design. In the last century, a similar experiment had been tried with considerable success, against the Government of King William. The Zealots of the Church were then taught to confound an attachment to Liberty, with aversion to the National Religion; to think the Church was in danger, because Persecution was in some degree restrained, and to plot the ruin of his Government, that the Protestant Religion might be safe under the Protection of the Catholic James.—In the next Reign near its close, the Hereditary Right of the Stuarts was maintained by the same Party, with a zeal which the Disciples of Mr. Burke could hardly exceed, to prevent the succession of the Hanoverian Family, and the supposed unavoidable consequence of that event, the destruction of the Church of England.—And now, after experience has repeatedly proved its folly and injustice, the ancient cry has resumed fresh powers of delusion; the reason of the besotted multitude is once more confounded; in the complete Toleration requested by Dissenters, they foresee the overthrow of the Church; in the growing spirit of Liberty, they dread hostility to Bishops and their Articles, to the dignified solemnity of their Cathedral and the pious simplicity of their Parochial Worship. Their zeal is again excited for the suppression of Liberty; and in their Judgment, the safety of our Religion depends on the continuance of a Septennial Parliament, and

and the preservation of the little venal and enslaved Boroughs in Wiltshire and Cornwall.

The time also for the commencement of this attack on the Reformers was skilfully chosen.— The partial disorders which afflicted France, during her struggle for Freedom, and which are perhaps inseparable from every great Revolution, were then at their height. To a Rhetorical Writer these calamities presented an easy opportunity to dress up a train of horrible phantoms, to affright his Readers; and having thus subdued their terrified imaginations, he would find it no very difficult task to confound in their apprehension peaceful Reformation, with hostile Revolution; he would be able to persuade them, that CONSPIRACY was at work here, that a daring faction of Republicans were at the eve of Insurrection, preparing to burst forth, and determined to involve their Country in all the miseries of Civil War. This advantage was seen by the Gentleman, who is perhaps the most Enthusiastic Adherent of our Aristocracy; who has long been considered as the confidential Interpreter of their Sentiments, the Dragoman of their little Mock Divan. He saw the happy opportunity, and he seized it; but not without some prudent delay produced his Reflections; written in a mode of eloquence that is impure indeed, and meretricious; but not ill calculated by rapid declamation, and splendid imagery to surprise and seduce the Public opinion. By his vehement harangues in Parliament against the

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repeal of the Test Act, the minds of zealous Churchmen had been duly prepared to receive the intended impression.—By this more vehement Publication, the fears, the rage, and all the holy antipathies of our Zealots were increased to an extravagant degree; the most odious and chimerical suspicions were widely spread and received with implicit credulity; the bigotry of the great vulgar, and the small, was thoroughly inflamed; and Intolerance was stimulated by the self-vaunted Friend of Toleration, to repeat at Birmingham the same horrid excesses, which at the instigation of a wild Fanatic in 1780, had convulsed the Empire, and nearly consumed the Capital.

But in a Country where free discussion is not wholly prohibited, nothing that is contrary to truth and reason, nothing that is hostile to the general interests of the Community, can be permanently supported merely by rhetorical artifice, and eloquent misrepresentation. When Civil and Religious Liberty were thus attacked, their Friends were not wanting to their defence.—In Parliament, Men connected with Aristocracy, but in a noble independent way, stood forward with a zeal for Liberty which I believe to be genuine, and at that moment superior to every personal consideration: they avowed their exultation with the People here, at the establishment of Liberty in France; demonstrated the inconsistency of their ancient Colleague, and refuted the pernicious doctrine which he vainly endeavoured

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to maintain. Out of Parliament, a succession of able Writers, from every part of the kingdom, and almost of every denomination, Churchmen, Dissenters, Reformers, and Men who had not concurred in the measures of Reformation, all hastened to defend their Common Principles of Freedom. Some of these Patriotic Writers were completely victorious, and overthrew the positions of their Antagonist with a very superior force of reason and true masculine eloquence. Not one of them was wholly unsuccessful in the combat, and unable to prove him erroneous in any important instance; not one failed to produce some example of gross misinformation, respecting the Revolution in France, or some misstatement of facts and principles respecting the Revolution in England; some misrepresentation of the character and conduct of our present Reformers, some doctrine subversive of General Liberty, or contradictory to the true Principles of the English Constitution. By these united efforts to support the Cause of Freedom, the authority of our modern Filmer has been reduced to its proper level; and the impression, which eloquent declamation had made in opposition to facts and the true theory of Government, has been gradually worn off the Public Mind. Powerful as the writings of that Gentleman have been to rouse and inflame the malignant passions, they have been weak and unsuccessful in the attempt to convince the judg-

ment of rational and disinterested Men; on whose decision ultimately depends the opinion of a whole Community. Already their determined disapprobation is followed by the general sense of the People, that the writings in question were calculated to stifle the Spirit of Liberty in England, and to perpetuate those gross Parliamentary Abuses, the necessary consequence of which must be a **CORRUPT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT**, which promotes the interest of a **FEW**, and injures or destroys the happiness of **MILLIONS!** but that their actual tendency is to create that disaffection which they have failed to prove; that riot and commotion have been their immediate effects; and that, by having roused the fierce spirit of Revolution, it is to be feared their eventual consequence may be to deluge the land with blood.

It therefore behoves the persons who have long opposed every reasonable proposition, to correct those abuses of the Constitution, under the frivolous pretence, that they are **INNOVATIONS**, dangerous to the Peace of the Country, to consider, whether their continued perseverance in this policy, may not produce the convulsions which every good Man would deplore, but which the privileged Orders in the State are more peculiarly concerned, by every just and prudent concession to labour to avert. At present, it is evident, that moderate measures
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of Reformation, conceded with a generous frankness by the Aristocracy would be received by the People with joy, and thankful satisfaction. Let the Septennial Bill be repealed, let the Representation of the People be amended on the principles proposed by Mr. Pitt, let the Right of Suffrage be granted to Copyholders, and Householders of a certain class, with effectual Regulations to discourage expence and tumult at elections, and without the aid of Mr. Burke's Asiatic eloquence to decry the NEW Constitutions of France and America, the adoption of similar principles in England, would be for ages yet to come an impossible event. That this prudent restitution of the popular Rights would soon be followed by the repeal of the Test Laws seems most probable; and the establishment of complete Toleration would certainly render some farther Reformation in the Church unavoidable. But this correction of Ecclesiastical Abuses would then be conducted on the same principles of cautious wisdom, and well-tempered zeal which strongly recommend the plan of Political Improvements, which has been now mentioned. In that case Theoretical perfection would neither be attained perhaps, in our Ecclesiastical Institutions, nor in the Form of our Political Government; but what would be practically much better would be effected; what would be more agreeable to the temper and prejudices of the Community, more suitable to the state of morals, and the

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distribution of property in the Country would be established.

By these temperate plans for accomplishing a Reformation of Parliament, for amending the Forms and correcting abuses in the Discipline of the Church, with the Repeal of every Intolerant Statute which would be naturally connected with those beneficial measures, the hazard of any great and violent Revolution in this Country would be avoided. The Nation would be happy in the secure possession of Liberty, and in the establishment of a Religion completely tolerant in its Spirit, and in its forms at once rational and pious, yet calculated for the comprehension of good Men of many unessential diversities of sentiment. The Dissenters of every denomination would thus be relieved and conciliated; the Bishops would recover the confidence of the Public; and the Parochial Clergy would acquire competence and private comfort; the Nobles would retain the safe unenvied possession of their constitutional privileges; and the People would rest satisfied with the surrender of those usurpations on their Rights of Representation, and Frequent Election which have so nearly ruined our happy System of Government. But should the Nobility, who on other great Political questions have been usually divided, continue combined, though with some splendid exceptions, in their opposition to every equitable plan of Public Reformation, their mistaken policy may
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too probably produce the most pernicious consequences. Men robbed or cheated of their Rights may be patient while a hope of redress remains by regular and pacific means; but when frequent denials of Justice have irritated, and driven them into desperate Councils, they seldom will stop at the mere recovery of their Rights. The People may commence their struggle on firm ground in defence of their ancient and undoubted Liberties; but in the heat and fury of the conflict, they may too probably be led far to exceed those limits. In such unhappy contests, they naturally wish to disable their antagonists, they too often rush on to retaliation and revenge. This was the unfortunate consequence of commotion in a former reign; hardship and calamity to the Many, with the destruction of the most respectable Orders in the State, were then the effect of a Civil War, which was provoked by the oppressive Government of Charles the First, and in which the People originally engaged with a view not to destroy but to protect and preserve the Constitution.

In the actual situation of the Country at this juncture, the dread of insurrection, as a nearly approaching calamity, is surely a groundless apprehension. No concerted design to recover the lost Rights of the People by force, and to retaliate on the ruling Classes can be thought possible at present; it must be allowed to be a visionary or an affected fear. The Spirit of Revolution
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has been conjured up, indeed, by one who knows not how to lay it; but it stalks through the land, presenting a fearful and portentous appearance, gazed at and shunned by the general mass of the People. At this moment, the state of the nation, respecting its Commerce and Public Revenue, is prosperous beyond its expectations, or its hopes; general satisfaction is the apparent consequence, and for some time that satisfaction may countervail in the Public Mind, the sense of danger to the Liberty of the Community. But let not this flow of unexpected prosperity lull our hereditary Rulers into a false security, which may be fatal to them and to the nation. To be safe, they must be just; and to preserve their Constitutional Privileges, they must consent to part with that power which they have gained in defiance of Law and the Constitution. The grievances complained of are great and undeni-able; they are felt as evils; they are resented as injuries; and silent as the Collective Body of the People now are, and apparently to vulgar eyes neither very generally nor very anxiously solicitous for redress, yet the time may come, much sooner, perhaps, than many may imagine, when their resentment will be found truly formidable.

Before the debt of the Public can be much reduced, and the load of those taxes which bear hardest on the bulk of the Community can be taken off, in any considerable degree, a great European War may break out upon us; or in the

the course of our struggle to depress or dethrone the Sultan of Mysore, our Oriental Allies may desert us; disasters may attend our Armies, the Carnatic may be lost, and Peace on any tolerable terms may be unattainable. At Home, and in Ireland, many conceivable events, to which a more direct allusion would be improper, may contribute to increase the danger and aggravate the discontent of the Nation. By misfortunes like these the sunshine of our present situation may be gradually, or suddenly clouded over; and a stormy season may succeed, in which the mild voice of moderation could not be heard. Astonished by the fall of our national grandeur, impoverished by the loss of credit, commerce, and landed rents, oppressed by an enormous load of taxes, and exasperated by the long-continued injustice of the superior powers, the English People would probably then renew, but in a louder tone, those expostulations with which the ear of Parliament has been so lately stunned; higher terms of Reformation, though still within the verge of the Constitution, would be expected; the restitution of our ancient Rights of Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage would be demanded; and should those claims be refused by the Legislature, the discontent of the Public would be ten fold increased.— Impatient from distress, enraged by this last injurious refusal of their Right, and urged on by the examples of France and America, the People

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would begin to extend their views of Reformation beyond the bounds of the Constitution; they would become less fearful of trying new and hazardous schemes of policy; the principles of the National Assembly, or of the American State, would gradually become the principles of a majority of the People of England; and thus the persevering injustice of the Aristocracy would at last produce, in the Community, that disaffection to the Constitution, which, without falsehood and calumny, cannot now be imputed to a few Individuals. Again the most respectable Orders in the State would be attacked by the People; again the abolition of the Upper House of Parliament would be effected; and the Throne itself would be again shaken or overturned: and after infinite hazards and calamities, perhaps, a NEW Republic, the beneficial effects of which may well be doubted, would be established on the ruins of the Constitution; in which no essential change is now meditated by the Popular Party; or could be approved by wise and dispassionate Men. But the influence and credit which such persons may now possess with the People, at that crisis would be lost; their pacific counsels would be over-ruled by the eagerness of impetuous Men, better-suited to the violence of that tempestuous season; their intreaties to respect the privileges of the Nobles, or the just Prerogative of the Crown, would then be slighted by the People, as their solicitations to restore the
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Rights of the People have hitherto been disregarded by the Nobles and the Crown.

Such, it is to be feared, would be the progress of our national dissensions, if an equitable Restoration of Popular Rights be still delayed or denied; and thus, perhaps, a scene of confusion would be commenced, the mischiefs of which no power of numbers could calculate, and no human wisdom could then prevent. For the preservation of general peace and harmony, from a just regard for rational Liberty and the happiness of the Community, it is devoutly to be wished, that justice may be conceded before the hour shall arrive, when fierce contention to recover the Rights of the Nation shall be unavoidable. Instead of hazarding their dignified privileges and great constitutional powers to preserve their encroachments on the Rights of Election, prudence and their interest, justly considered, seem to recommend to our great Patrician Families and to the Crown to secure those powers and privileges, and the Constitution itself, by yielding a power unwarrantably gained, before the national resentment be completely roused, and moderate concessions no longer would be accepted with the grateful approbation of the Public. To our hereditary Rulers and to the Community, there is much danger in the counsels of wild and enthusiastic Men, whose writings, however opposite they may be in their principles and their immediate aim, have the

same ultimate tendency, by exciting extravagant demands on the one hand, and suffering no concession on the other, to provoke discord and national confusion. In the peculiar circumstances of this Country, it is evident, that the consequence of those counsels may be in the highest degree calamitous. But by the patience and moderation of the People, and the justice and public spirit of the Nobles, and confidential Advisers of the Crown, general harmony, on the principles of a fair and equitable accommodation, may yet be secured, and the impending danger may be averted.

That the suggestions of prudence, and the still higher considerations of justice and benevolence, may avail to prevent the miseries of a Civil War, every good man must deeply imprecate. But should other counsels unfortunately prevail, should the Nobles, whether in opposition to the Crown, or in its confidence, continue inseparably united to support the present depraved state of the Legislature; should the Nation be finally provoked to seek redress from Commotion and a Revolution effected by force, in that unhappy event, which none would more sincerely deplore than they who have long been the Advocates of a temperate Reformation, those persons will at least enjoy the conscious satisfaction of having laboured to prevent confusion, not by quenching the spirit of Liberty, not by sanctifying abuse and usurpation, with every consequent

consequent corruption, but by pointing the zeal of their Fellow-Citizens to its proper and necessary object, to the attainment of a just and moderate correction of great Parliamentary Grievances, by those orderly and legal means which our impaired Constitution still affords. At that calamitous period, popular rage may be the instrument of ruin ; but the true cause of the public misery will be found in the pride, ambition, and selfish policy of our hereditary Rulers ; and that obstinacy, which refused to surrender the smallest particle of its usurped power, will be condemned by an impartial posterity, more than the violence of that national resentment which punished usurpation with extreme severity.

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A LETTER

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L E T T E R

TO THE

Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT,

BY THE

Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,

Late CHAIRMAN of the COMMITTEE of ASSOCIATION,

of the COUNTY of YORK.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME verbal Corrections have been made, and a few Sentences have been added to this **LETTER**, near the conclusion, since it was sent on the 10th of February to **Mr. PITT**. These corrections and additions it is not necessary to point out particularly;—it is sufficient to apprise the Reader that they have been made, but without effecting any material change in the argument of the Letter.

A LETTER, &c.

BURTON-HALL, Feb. 9, 1793.

SIR,

I Have been induced, by the increasing attention of the Public to the subject of Parliamentary Reformation, to prepare for the press a Collection of Political Papers relating to that subject generally, but in a more particular manner respecting the attempt made some years ago, by the County of York and other considerable Districts, &c. to recover a more equal Representation, and more frequent Elections to serve the Public in Parliament. The Resolutions which were then passed by the Popular Assemblies on the very defective state of our Representation, contained principles on which a moderate, but substantial Reformation might have been effected; and when you generously undertook to offer to Parliament such a temperate Plan as the sense of the People, as far as it had been previously declared, seemed to point out, it had

been very happy for the Public, and not less so for our Hereditary Rulers, if that Plan had not been rejected by the united opposition of their respective Partizans. By the Regulations alluded to, the great majority of those persons who had complained to Parliament of gross abuses in the Representation, would have been completely gratified, because the Regulations were, in fact, their own propositions improved by various modifications, which your superior judgment had suggested. Already your Regulations, if then adopted, would have operated nearly to the full extent proposed, and would have amputated, in the easiest manner, at the option of the persons concerned, many of the smallest, most venal, or most dependent Boroughs, and transferred, in an adequate degree, and in due proportion, their surrendered Franchises to the great Communities of the Kingdom, the Metropolis, the Counties, and the great Unrepresented Towns. This was a mild, a moderate, and yet an effectual System of Reformation; not sufficiently extensive, perhaps, in the proposed communication of the Right of Suffrage, but capable of receiving that extension hereafter, without the least derangement of the System then improved, by admitting decent Householders to vote for County Members; in the mean-time securing a very important improvement in the Representation of the People; and yet not only avoiding the hazard of a Revolution at that moment, but preventing almost the possibility
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of such a fearful event in every future period of time. With this conviction of the great utility of your Plan, and with every possible sentiment of grateful respect for your exertions to promote it, the popular agents desisted for some years to press the subject again on Parliament, or on the public mind. They desisted, well satisfied with your plan, and your conduct in the prosecution of it, and relying on your sincere and zealous attachment to their cause, they wished for no other advocate, they looked for no greater concessions, they aimed only to renew their suit by your means, and upon the very same terms when the fit moment should arrive.

But since that period, particularly during the last year, it is evident, that in several of these respects a material change of sentiment has taken place, and it is not improbable that some of those persons who triumphed on the rejection of your Plan in 1785, would now gladly see it adopted by Parliament, if at the same time the ancient attachment of the People to the Constitution of England could be universally restored. Various causes have combined to sour the minds of a considerable portion of the people, and to prepare them for bolder, more decisive, but more hazardous Schemes of Reformation. Some of the men alluded to, consider the former advocate of their cause with distrust, and abandon his temperate Plan, for the broad principle of Universal Suffrage adopted by the Duke of Richmond; while others avow their partiality for a

Republican Scheme of Government, admire the second Revolution of France, and would adopt the principles of it at every public and personal risque. To this Class not many of the middle station of life appear to belong; and very few who possess great consideration in the country, from their rank, fortune, or talents, seem to have placed themselves at their head. But it is evident there is a tendency to violent change, which, tho' manifested to no great extent at present, is yet a circumstance which deserves the most serious consideration. That this enthusiastic zeal for a total, or a very great and dangerous change in the Frame of our Legislature, may be checked by the rough hand of authority, straining every judicial and military power to suppress discussion and beat down the free Spirit of the People; this may be the wish of Mr. BURKE and his Disciples, but it cannot, I hope, be yours. Every man of humanity must wish to prevent discord and confusion by lenient means; every prudent lover of Liberty must wish to preserve the Constitution, not only from external violence and the wild schemes of Republican Innovators, but from the dangers of internal injury, from those more subtle and more formidable Enemies of the Constitution, who, availing themselves of the present national fervour of Loyalty, would brand with infamy every man who dares to point out abuses and express his wish for their correction, even on your temperate principles; without which it is plain, that at no distant period inveterate abuses

abuses will have become incorrigible, and the Constitution itself will be virtually annihilated.

There never has been a time, in my conception, when it more behoved the true Friends of the Constitution to advance, but with due temper and caution, in that middle course by which the dangerous extremes of the rash Leveller and the unprincipled Supporter of every abuse may best be avoided. Entertaining these sentiments, I deprecate a Foreign War as evidently tending on the one hand to increase the danger of Anarchy and a forcible Revolution, and on the other of Arbitrary Power and the loss of Popular Rights; and I wish to recommend to the Great a lenient and conciliatory disposition, to the People a firm purpose to vindicate their Rights in a temperate way, and with as little variation from your propositions as justice and the existing circumstances will permit.—For, that your propositions of Reform ought to be strictly adhered to, and would alone be completely satisfactory to the Public at this time, I cannot venture to assure you; but with two additions which accord with the principles of your system in the one case, and with those of justice in the other, I do believe they would be fully approved and permanently acquiesced in by the People. The additions, I allude to, are, that the Unrepresented Householders in England, contributing to Parochial Taxes, be allowed to vote in the County Elections; and that Elections

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in Scotland be placed as nearly as possible on a similar footing with those in England. It was one principal merit of your Plan, and the merit of it was entirely your own, that it provided against any great inconvenience from the Inequality which might arise afresh in the Representation, from the future growth of great Unrepresented Towns and the decay of those which are represented, by specifying the manner in which, when such instance of Inequality should occur, the Right of Representation should be transferred from the Depopulated Borough to the great Unrepresented Town. By this provision the necessity of any future Systematical Reform in the Frame of the House of Commons would have been precluded by your propositions. And at this moment, were your plan of Reformation adopted, with the additional propositions which I have here suggested, those improvements would remove every material abuse in the Representation of the People, silence their just and general complaint, and at the same time place an insuperable barrier to defend the Constitution, and to stop the career of Republican Innovation. This, which may justly be deemed a great and peculiar advantage of your System of Reformation, has been undervalued, because it has been little understood by the superior classes. The fears of Aristocratical Men have been wrought up to an extravagant pitch by the wild eloquence of the Enemy of Popular Rights. He has taught them to believe that their only safety

safety consists in the constant persevering refusal to concede the smallest particle of the redress craved by the people; that if a single concession be made, if a single decayed pin in the Frame of Parliament be removed, it would open the door to the utmost latitude of change, and the sacrifice of one abuse, or one usurped command of a Depopulated Borough, would lead, by certain and inevitable necessity, to all the Confusions and Horrors of a Neighbouring Kingdom. But were your Plan more plainly unfolded to their eyes, were it made manifest to them that it proposed to be, and undoubtedly would be a final arrangement of the Popular Representation, their fears, it may be hoped, would be dismissed.

* A Noble Duke might then, with satisfaction, apply to your System of Reform, the opinion which I believe he expressed of the extension of the Right of Suffrage proposed in Scotland by a respectable Baronet, † whom I consider as one of the truest Patriots of that Country: "This I approve, this is good as far as it goes; and we see how far it is to go."—Be that as it may, I hope the Publication in question may tend, in some degree, to remove the misconceptions and abate the prejudices of the powerful Few; and at the same time to check the progress of Revolutionary Principles in the Many, by presenting a detailed account of the rise, progress, and termination of this popular

* The Duke of Portland.

† Sir Thomas Dundas.

enterprise;

enterprise; a view of the difficulties encountered in the course of the struggle, most part of which remain to be encountered again, with a display of the advantages gained for the Public by regular and peaceful means, and a more full statement, than has yet been published, of the important improvements proposed by your System of Reform; which, though lost by the disunion of the People at one period, and their languor at another, may now be carried by the renewal of their united efforts, by exertions worthy of virtuous and benevolent men, by toils without hazard to private Individuals, without inconvenience to the Public; the fruits of which no Political Arithmetic could justly calculate, on an estimate of the probable calamities prevented by it, and the immense advantages procured to the Constitution, and to the Public, to this Age, and to Posterity. These are views which, I flatter myself, you do not, cannot disapprove; and under this impression, I beg leave to inform you, that I think the Publication of some of the Letters and other Papers which I have had the honour to receive from you, relating to the subject of Political Reformation, particularly a Paper intitled, *Heads of a Bill or Bills for amending the Representation*, would be of the greatest importance to promote the end proposed; and, if you have no objection to their appearance, I will insert them in this Collection. If you should dislike the appearance of these Papers at this time, they certainly shall be suppressed on the present occasion,

occasion. But to destroy them, or to engage my promise for their entire and perpetual suppression, is what I do not perceive to be necessary. They are Papers of great importance to the Public; and, in certain conceivable circumstances, I should think myself bound, by the strongest obligation of Public Duty, to produce them, even although your consent could not possibly be obtained.

And now, Sir, having stated fully my immediate inducement for troubling you with this Letter, I should naturally think it proper, in other and happier times, to close my letter here. But when I consider the more than critical situation of the Country, when I recollect the confidential intercourse which has passed between us, and reflect that I am indebted for the honour of those communications to the previous trust reposed in me, by a very considerable Body of Gentlemen, who knew my principles and approved my conduct, and who themselves possessed a large share of national esteem and confidence for their truly patriotic exertions; I feel it to be a duty to you, and to myself, to them, and to the Public, not to conceal from you my sentiments on some late Transactions and my reasons for earnestly deprecating the impending rupture with France, on any of those grounds which have been stated, or those undeclared views which may be conceived to operate on the mind of Parliament and of the Cabinet. And though I cannot flatter myself that the opinion of a private
Individual

Individual can have much weight in your mind at a moment like this, when the resolution for Hostilities seems to be fixed, and the terrible Machine of War is just ready to roll on; yet, considering I can with truth assure you that they are the decided opinions also of many of your best and most disinterested Friends, I cannot suppose that this frank, but not unfriendly, representation will be wholly useless to the Public, and unavailing either to incline you to preserve the Pacific System to which we owe the present boasted prosperity of the Country; or, if that be now hopeless, to incline you, as soon as possible, to return to it; and I heartily wish it may be of any avail to recommend lenient measures also in our Internal Affairs; without which, particularly without some concession in favour of Popular Rights, I fear it will not be possible for any human prudence long to prevent some very calamitous eruption.

I now proceed to represent to you my reasons for disapproving one part of your conduct as a Member of Parliament, individually; and several parts of it as a Minister, connected with the other Members of the Cabinet; especially regarding the present unhappy dispute with France: but not without this previous assurance, that I perform this task with pain and reluctance, and for many, many instances of your former conduct, I have a thousand times sincerely applauded you, and still think you deserved applause.

The instance of your individual conduct as a
Member

Member of Parliament, to which I alluded above, is your Declaration of Hostility to Mr. Grey's future Motion, when he gave notice in the last Session of his intention to agitate afresh the subject of Parliamentary Reformation. I own, Sir, this was to me a most mortifying disappointment. I had before understood, that whenever the People manifested any stronger and more earnest desire than was displayed in 1785, that a Reform of Parliament should take place, you would gladly stand forward again to promote it; and, connected with this resolution, I approved your forbearing to renew your Motion, and, in fact, to degrade the Public Cause, by exposing it, unsupported by the Public Voice, to certain and repeated defeat. For this reason, when Mr. Flood proposed his Motion on the same subject in 1790, and you declined to support it, your conduct appeared to me justifiable. Mr. Flood proposed, at that time, to extend the Right of Suffrage to certain Classes of Householders; this seems a measure perfectly proper, though his idea of giving these Householders a separate Body of Representatives, is liable, I think, to insuperable objections; but though he supported his propositions with great force of argument and manly eloquence, yet, when you objected the indisposition of the People to the Measure, and its consequent unseasonableness at that time, the truth of your observation could not be denied, nor could you be justly blamed for not concurring in that proposal. But, in the short space
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of two years, the disposition and sentiments of the Public had undergone a material change. A strong tendency to Reformation was visible in many parts of the Kingdom, when Mr. Grey gave notice of his intended Motion: Had you remained silent, you would have been blameless; had you declared your adherence to your former ideas of Political Reformation, and your readiness to promote that necessary work, whenever the sense of the Nation was sufficiently declared in its favour, you would have acted, I think, consistently with your professed opinions and your former conduct, you would have given a friendly countenance to this laudable enterprise, you would have preserved your credit and influence with the whole Body of Reformers, and would have had it in your power to model the intended propositions, in a great measure, according to your judgment, and to have effected, what every prudent Friend to the Constitution wishes to see, a temperate correction of its abuses, beneficial for the advantages which would immediately result from it; and doubly valuable for the mischiefs it would be certain to prevent.

In vindication of your announced opposition, it may be pleaded, that *the Time* was unfit; that is, in the year 1790, it was improper to attempt a Reformation of Parliament, because the People were indifferent to it; and in the year 1792, or 1793, it is improper, because they are become too earnest to obtain it. From this simple statement,

statement, how unbecoming your character must this excuse appear, should any of your imprudent Partizans unwarily advance it? How futile, how ludicrously absurd must it appear when considered in connection with the conduct of Government in Ireland, where it is understood that concessions, as ample as any contended for here, have been, or will be, made at the express recommendation of Government, and *at a time* when it is notorious, that the claims of the People of Ireland have neither been less extensive, nor their conduct more regular, than the conduct and claims of the People of Great Britain. In my judgment, the intended concessions there are prudent and proper; it is never an unfit time to do National Justice, nor unwise to content great portions of the People: But abuses exist here as in Ireland; and the maxims of Political Justice are as binding on this side of the channel as on that: Why, therefore, is the time objected to here? When considerable portions of the English or of any People complain of abuses which cannot be denied, the earliest period is the best and safest to put an end to their existence.

But the fair truth may be that, on the occasion alluded to, you were taken by surprise, and having been long in habits of controversy with the Honourable Member, you somewhat inconsiderately treated the great National Question, of which he had given notice, as a mere Opposition Question. If that had been the case, and

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if your Opponent had brought forward his Motion, merely with the unworthy view to embarrass a Minister whom he dislikes, nothing could be a greater triumph to him, than this apparent inconsistency of your conduct.

But I see no reason to doubt, that your opponent acted from the same generous motives as yourself, when you repeatedly declared to Parliament that without some Reformation there, the Rights and Liberty of the Nation could not be safe: And he and every rational Friend to the Constitution would undoubtedly rejoice to find, that on mature consideration you had resolved to alter your conduct and support his Motion. To form and execute this purpose would be an act of resolute virtue, which I acknowledge ought to be expected from few persons living; but you have before displayed the magnanimity publicly to confess an error; and in the opinion of the wisest men, the confession did you more credit than being many times in the right. On the present question similar conduct would do your character additional honour; it would be a signal instance of your superiority to the little passions of little minds; it would be a proof of patriotism for which you would have the most unquestionable title to the gratitude of the Public.

It is natural to wish that a noble character should be complete, and in every point invulnerable. But on considering the measures of the Cabinet for the last ten months, the Friends of Reformation will perceive little rea-

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son to flatter themselves, that your deliberate thoughts have inclined you to make this sacrifice to the consistency of your character. In those measures and their immediate consequences they will discover no indications of a lenient and accommodating spirit, no tendency to any popular concession, or any redress of grievances in Britain. On the contrary those measures present a uniform system of authority, harshly and severely exercised; of Proclamations branding with one common mark of infamy, the Leveller and the rash Republican, and the most orderly and rational Reformers, the truest Patriots, and the best Friends of the Constitution; of numerous Prosecutions tending alike to punish Sedition and to suppress the Freedom of discussion; of Barracks erected in almost every considerable Place, calculated equally to intimidate riotous men, and to over-awe and quell the spirit of Parliamentary Reformation, however pacific however regular it may have been: And the Associations which have been the immediate consequence of some of these measures, and which have assumed to themselves the accusatorial power vested by the Constitution in the Attorney-General or the Grand Juries of the Kingdom, if suffered to proceed in their career, neither discountenanced by Government nor opposed by the sense and spirit of the Public, what would they leave us that is either sweetly confidential in Private Society, or open, bold, and generous in the exertions of

Public-spirited Men? It was proposed, I believe by Mr. Burke to Mr. Fox, about the beginning of these disputes that he would join with him, *to frown down the doctrines of Liberty.* On considering the tendency of these measures a candid man might be tempted to suppose that the proposal, to which Mr. Fox gave a generous refusal, had been accepted by the Cabinet. But whatever was the intention of the Cabinet, the tendency of their internal measures has been exactly suitable to the wish of Mr. Burke, and his political Disciple, who could prefer the slavish rants and the flattery of his Master, to the friendship and manly freedom of Mr. Fox. But though I reprobate the tendency of some of these measures, and the dangerous abuses which already have been produced by others, yet I am ready to admit that the times are truly embarrassing to Ministers; that on the one hand the Great are unwilling to concede, while on the other hand a spirit of discontent has begun to ferment in the great body of the Nation; and therefore that faults great as these may be excused in Ministers sincerely labouring to preserve Public tranquillity. For the good performed they deserve credit; for the evils, which may be the accidental concomitants, they may, within certain bounds, deserve forgiveness. But if this is a valid plea for that succession of harsh measures which we have witnessed within the last ten months, how strange

stranger is the infatuation which, at the same time, can plunge this dissatisfied country into a war with France, as if the rapid fall of the Funds, the loss of our Foreign Trade, the diminution of our Manufactures, and the increase of Taxes, which must be the consequence of a War, would have no tendency to aggravate popular discontent and increase the fermentation in the public mind, even if the interest of the Nation were evidently the object of the War. How greatly must that danger be increased, when it is understood that a War, of such extent as that with France must be, is resolved on, not for the preservation, immediate or remote, of this Country or any of its valuable interests, not to avenge insult, to preserve the faith of Treaties, or to repel the aggression of a declared Foe, but for some other purpose which is not declared, but which every art of eloquence is in vain employed to cover.

It is said, by the Person to whom this Nation may justly impute a great part of the perils with which it is at present surrounded, that the French are a Nation of Atheists. The Creed of Rome is still, however, the Creed of their Established Church, and of the Body of the Nation. But grant that the assertion were literally true, instead of being a most extravagant exaggeration, is Infidelity, or is Idolatry a justifiable cause of War? Must our Minister at the Court of Constantinople be withdrawn, because the Turk-

ish Nation despises Christianity? Or must our pompous, and perhaps useful, Embassy to China be recalled, because the inferior Chinese are Pagans, and their literary Mandarins are Atheistic Philosophers? Must the plains of all Europe be deluged with human blood for a Creed? And must we become the enemies of by far the greatest part of mankind for such a reason as this? Even the Enthusiasm of Mr. Burke's Disciples would revolt at such absurdity.—But the French Republic has been founded on principles of Anarchy and Confusion; tumult and massacre have disgraced its origin; and, after many intermediate enormities, the murder of the King has finished the horrors of this last Revolution, and will stain the annals of France with ignominy to the latest posterity. With grief I acknowledge, that a more unjust, a more atrocious deed than the murder of Louis the XVIth, is not to be found in History. I most sincerely deplore that act of vengeance as a measure equally unnecessary, impolitic, and unjust, tending to retard the peaceful settlement of France, and to disgrace the cause of Human Liberty in the eyes of mankind; and affecting the interest of this Country with peculiar fatality; which, if that event had not occurred, would not have been exposed to the calamities of War. But what right has England to punish the authors of this atrocity, or indeed to interfere in any manner in the internal affairs of that Country? The
domestic

domestic crimes committed by Individuals, or by the Ruling Power of any Nation, have never yet been held to be a just cause of War. Crimes of uncommon magnitude indeed have been committed in France; but whether the actors of those crimes should be punished—by whom—and how—these are questions on which not the Austrian, not the Prussian, or English Court, but the People of France alone, must determine. When a great Princess imprisoned her Husband, and mounted his vacant Throne, perhaps that Revolution was completed by means as dark and horrible as the late atrocious act which every good man must lament. And yet no war of punishment ensued; vengeance was left to Him to whom vengeance belongs. But the folly is too apparent for any farther elucidation of going to War to punish the innocent Many for the crimes of the guilty Few, and thus wantonly to add to those miseries of the unfortunate human race, the enormous sum of which we affect to deplore.

But the principles of Liberty and Equality lead directly to Anarchy and Ruin; they are contagious principles, and the introduction of them in this Country can be prevented by War alone. It were more just to assert, that all great Revolutions in Government, on whatever principle they may be conducted, are usually productive of temporary confusion and many enormities; and, in proportion to the extent and importance of

the changes effected, will be the duration and extent of these consequent evils. But, since the obnoxious principles have been predominant in America near twenty years, and have there produced the most happy tranquillity and good order, it is evident that they are not principles necessarily destructive of the end for which Society was formed.—The love of Liberty is an inherent passion of the human mind; neither art, nor force, nor any human authority, can wholly eradicate this passion: Hence the contagious effect of the French doctrines upon the enslaved Peasants of Germany and Poland, of Spain and Italy. Nature meant them to be free; they are conscious it is their right, and every fibre of every heart beats high with the expectation of deliverance. That these expectations must be realized to a certain degree in all the great Monarchies of the Continent, seems highly probable; a little sooner in some countries, a little later in others; with more or less violent convulsions in all, as various unforeseen circumstances, combined with the prudence or the insanity of their respective Governments, may determine. England alone perhaps is that European Country in which it is possible that the wisdom of Government might happily prevent any great concussion; because the People of England have not to seek for Freedom in a new Constitution; freedom and equal protection of property and personal safety, are the Rights which, in speculation, are held out to all by our present

present Constitution. To bring theory and practice more together, to correct abuses of recent introduction, and to restore our Parliament to the purity of its original institution, are benefits which our wisest Patriots have laboured to attain; which our greatest Statesmen have thought attainable by peaceful means; and with which the English People undoubtedly would be content. They are industrious, they are peaceful, they wish to enjoy the fruits of their industry without a War, and to recover their lost weight in our mixed Frame of Government, without the hazards of a Revolution. By persevering in the system of a neutrality with France, and adopting the spirit of your moderate propositions of Reform, the Cabinet might preserve their Countrymen from the dreaded infection of France; but opposite measures will probably produce a contrary effect.—It is from the prevalence of Mr. Burke's Politics alone among the upper classes of Society, that the rise of any dangerous disaffection in this Country is to be apprehended. To the plain sense of Englishmen, a War commenced with France on his principles, must appear to be a War on French Liberty, to beat down the equitable claims of Reformation here, and eventually to destroy every valuable Right of the People. Such will be the suspected motives for plunging this Country in a War in which our fleets may be victorious, but in which even our successes must be ruinous.—For views thus wild and chimerical,

chimerical, the Nation, whose wounds received in the late War with America are hardly yet closed up, must prepare to bleed afresh: For objects thus odious and detestable, the industrious classes of the People must forego their comforts, the shoulders already galled with Taxes, the pernicious consequence of former injustice and folly, must submit again to new and heavier impositions. They will be cheerfully voted, no doubt, by the faithful Commons, but the Commons will no longer enjoy the confidence of the Public; every vote of credit or supply will then increase the general disgust; and should no great disaster befall us in the course of Hostilities, should nothing unfortunate break forth in Ireland or America, the mere protraction of the War must exhaust the patience of a disabused People. But what may be the contagious effect of French opinions on a Nation sick of the War of Kings, groaning under an intolerable load of Taxes, and hopeless of redress from Men whom they will cease to consider as their Representatives, it is needless to state; to foresee it is easy, to prevent it may become impossible.

But these, I am persuaded, are not the motives which preponderate in your mind upon this momentous occasion, and impel it, with so much impetuosity, to a War with France. Undoubtedly you are influenced by other reasons less unbecoming a Statesman, less unworthy the Son of Chatham.

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The obnoxious Decree by the National Convention of France, on the 19th of November, 1792, has been insisted on as a warrantable cause of War. But, as a subsequent explanation of that justly obnoxious Decree has removed all ground of apprehension that it is the intention of France to excite Rebellion against the actual Government of any neutral Nation, the Decree in question may be dismissed without any farther consideration.

The obligation to resist the opening of the Scheldt has been insisted on with still more force. We are bound by Treaty to the Dutch to prevent the free Navigation of that river. The Convention of France have declared their resolution that the Navigation of it shall be free. But the Dutch, you fairly acknowledge, have not made any requisition to Britain to fulfil that engagement. Reasons of prudential Policy, arising probably from the distracted state of Parties in Holland, as well as from the great Military force of France now posted on their Frontiers, and ready to invade their defenceless Territory on the first breach of their Neutrality, may well incline them to peace, and to wave our interference to oppose the opening of the Scheldt.

National justice surely does not require that we should urge the Cabinet at the Hague, against the inclination, and, perhaps, against the interest of the Dutch People, to engage in a War with France. Of the interests and of the dangers of
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their Country they are the best and the only proper judges. At this moment, our interposition to excite them to Hostilities, instead of being the prudent and faithful discharge of our duty, as their Ally, seems to be an officious and unseasonable interference, which may expose them to the greatest dangers. By persevering in their Neutrality, the United Provinces might remain safe and unmolested amidst surrounding Armies. But should they abandon their pacific system, at the instigation of Britain, it is not improbable, that an immediate irruption by the Army of France may produce in those Provinces the most fatal consequences; a dissolution of their ancient Government, and a New Constitution on the hated principles of France. But in the event of a War these impending perils may be averted by timely succour from the Prussian Army, and the officious friendship of Britain may not prove the ruin of her Ally. This will be a truly fortunate escape for Holland; yet the dangerous Policy of our Cabinet cannot be popular in that Country; and in this, more specious reasons will be necessary to justify to their Countrymen their eagerness for War, than the obligation of a Treaty, for the fulfillment of which no requisition has been made.

More specious reasons for a rupture with France are, however, sufficiently obvious.—1st, It has been said that we ought to engage in a War to prevent the aggrandisement of France.—

France.—2d, It has been thought, probably, that we ought to seize this fortunate opportunity to aggrandize Britain.

The first of these considerations has been much insisted on by yourself in your speech in Parliament on the 1st of February, and it must be owned that it bears the semblance of sound policy; but, on examination, the apprehension of danger to the independence of Europe from the arms of France, will be found, I conceive, to be unsupported by any solid grounds, either of fact or of political speculation. The second of these considerations has not been expressly stated in any speech in Parliament which has fallen under my inspection; but as it appears probable that it may have had a considerable influence on the Cabinet, and still more on that part of the Parliament and the Nation which is inclined to War, it may merit a distinct examination.

On the first topic, I am willing to concede, that a lust of power, which is often the ruling passion of great despotic Princes, may be found sometimes predominant in Popular Senates; and more particularly, that the designs of the National Convention are probably as unjust and ambitious, as the views of Louis the XIVth, and in this respect more culpable, than a thirst of conquest is contradictory to their professed principles of peace and moderation; and though the Government of France is in an unsettled state, though

though much of her wealth has been hoarded or exported, and many of her Citizens have been lost to that Country by massacre, banishment, and emigration; yet, notwithstanding these disadvantages, there still seems to remain, to the National Convention, a greater degree of Political Power than was possessed by that Monarch; a greater population, a more extensive fund of credit, and a more ardent Military Spirit, pervading the whole body of the Nation. But the Princes already opposed to the National Convention, appear sufficiently able to check and defeat their hasty projects of aggrandisement.—Since the age of Louis the XIVth, the power of the Austrian Monarchy has been increased in a much greater proportion than that of France. The discontents in Hungary, which so greatly weakened the Emperors, who were the antagonists of Louis, have, by the wisdom and ability of the succeeding Austrian Monarchs, been happily composed; and the whole force of that Monarchy may now be turned against France, to which it is in population almost equal, in the number of its disciplined troops lately much superior, with Revenues not very inferior to those of the Republic. To this formidable force, let that of the Prussian Monarchy be added; which, from insignificance in the age of Louis the XIVth, has risen to a rank nearly equal in Military Power to that of the greatest Empires of Europe. When to the force of these

two Monarchies is added that of the Germanic Empire, Sardinia, and Russia, whose power, tho' now so preponderant, was, in the last Century, little felt or respected in Europe; the mighty strength of this confederacy must appear, according to the ordinary rules of Political Estimation much superior to that of France; and likely soon to wrest from her, the conquests she has made, without the aid of Britain and her Ally.

But what avail the superior numbers and discipline of the Allied Armies against the ardour and enthusiasm of the Freemen of France? Or what credit is due to the common calculations of Political Arithmetic, when contradicted by facts and the actual conquests of the French Armies? To this difficulty, I think, a satisfactory solution may be given.

It is true, in August last the Armies of Austria and Prussia, then preparing to attack France, and restore the old despotic Government by force, in the opinions of the most experienced Military Officers, were greatly superior to any means of resistance which the French Nation could oppose to them; yet such was the uncalculated power of their enthusiasm to defend their Republican Liberty and the insulted Independence of their Country, so completely did the ardour of Freedom supply the want of discipline in the Volunteer Armies of France, that, in a few weeks, the German Invaders were obliged to retreat before them with disgrace.

Soon

Soon after that unexpected success, the French Armies, after a short struggle in the Netherlands, took possession of that Country and of some Frontier Districts of Germany, which, in the proud presumption of certain conquest, the Enemies of France had left unprepared for defence. A short time before this period, Savoy and Nice also had been conquered with as little risque or trouble. But can it be supposed, that the Volunteer Armies of France will act with equal enthusiasm to preserve the countries they have thus hastily over-run? or that the extension of the Frontiers of France is an object as deeply interesting to the French People, as the defence of their National Rights and Liberty? These suppositions are contrary to all experience of human nature; and they are contradicted by the actual state of the French Armies.

It is observable, in the human species, that self-preservation is a stronger and more uniformly prevailing principle of action than any other, though it may sometimes be over-ruled by resentment, or some other of the malevolent and destructive passions. But when this observation is extended from Individuals to whole Communities of Men, it is liable to no such exceptions. Nations will always be found to make greater efforts to defend themselves, than to conquer or destroy their antagonists. And with this maxim, the actual state of the Armies of France seems to correspond. The Volunteers
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who flocked to the standard of Dumourier, when Champagne was invaded, after having repulsed the enemy beyond the boundaries of France, no longer thought their service necessary; they quitted the Army, and returned to the bosom of their families. Of this secession the Generals have frequently complained to the National Convention; but the means of prevention were not to be found. Attacked at home, it may be safely predicted that France will be found unconquerable; her National Guards will defend her again with equal enthusiasm, and with final, if not equal success. But that her Armies will be able to retain the countries of which they have lately taken possession, against the force of the Austrian and Prussian Monarchs, and the Powers combined with them, is an apprehension not countenanced by any apparent probability. It is evident, at least, that Britain and Holland might safely defer their accession to the Confederacy till the events of another campaign had more clearly demonstrated the relative force of the present combatants, and confirmed, or wholly removed, the apprehension of danger from France. It would then appear manifest, either that our interposition to prevent any great increase of the power of France, was unnecessary, and thus a great national calamity would be prevented; or, if there were an evident necessity for War, to prevent a dangerous aggrandisement of the French Republic,

public, that necessity would reconcile this Nation to the unavoidable pressure of new Taxes; and thus the danger of internal commotion would be avoided.

2d. But it may be thought, if the Nations at present engaged in War with France are more than equal in power to that country, and likely to recover the conquered provinces almost as quickly as they were lost, that supposition confirms the policy of an immediate commencement of hostilities, on the part of Britain, with a view to aggrandise this Country at the expence of France. How unjust is this reason for War? How unfit, therefore, either to be adopted or avowed. And yet, in the present situation of this Country, it is not more unjust and unbecoming, than it is impolitic and unsafe. There is another, a more safe and honourable way to aggrandise Britain, by adhering to a Pacific System, by forbearing to harass the Commercial and Manufacturing industry of the Country with needless Wars and needless Armaments, by persevering in a plan of Public Oeconomy, and diminishing the Debts and Taxes of the Nation, those especially which bear hard on the Poorest Classes of the Community. This is the true policy of a State like that of Britain, encumbered with debts, and perplexed by the discontents of its subjects. These are the conquests of peace; these are cheap and inoffensive ways of aggrandisement, which would equally augment the
Political

Political Power of our Country and increase the means of comfort and satisfaction to every individual in it. But, after having successfully pursued this policy for some years, and gradually restored their almost ruined Country to prosperity and splendour, the Cabinet seem to have abandoned this Pacific System as if weary of the tame uniformity of Peace, and at last regardless of that applause with which their generous neutrality to France had been rewarded. Widely different from their first peaceful system was the policy of the late War against the Sultan of Mysore; at the opening of it, France was too much disabled, by the convulsions consequent on the first Revolution, to assist her East-Indian Ally; the opportunity was too tempting to be passed, and though some recent Declarations of Parliament, protesting against any farther encroachments in India, seemed not quite reconcilable to these ambitious views, the War was approved by Parliament, and a great part of the territories of Tippoo Sultan was soon afterwards divided among the Confederate Powers of Britain, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas. And now another opportunity, no less tempting, presents itself in the West. The French Sugar Islands are in a state of great discontent, if not of Counter-Revolution; to take possession of these Islands, and of the other Colonies of France, perhaps, with the previous approbation of the Inhabitants, would be an easy enterprize for the Fleets of

Britain. And what good Citizen would repine to pay additional Taxes, for a few years, to support a War of Glory and National Aggrandisement? By these splendid objects a part of the Nation may, for a time, be dazzled; it may be deaf to every remonstrance of prudence, and insensible to every impression of justice; and while this moral stupefaction lasts the success of projects which no one dares to avow, and yet, which no one doubts are formed, will be applauded by that part of the Nation. At last, the strong pressure of distress will make itself felt; for it will not be a short War, nor will few Taxes be wanted; the French are combating for all that can be dear to man, for the Liberty Civil and Religious which they have chosen to establish, for the independence, the existence of their Country. In proportion to the value of these objects, their resistance will be vigorous and persevering; their divisions will be in a great measure healed up by the necessity of self-defence, against their common foes, their hatred of Monarchy will be confirmed, and their animosity against the unhappy Family, whose interest has been the ostensible cause of the War, will become less furious, perhaps, but more inveterate and implacable. Their expenditure will, indeed, be enormous; their naval equipments will add considerably to the immense expences of one of the largest Armies in Europe. Already their trade is nearly ruined, and their taxes

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now very deficient, must become more unproductive during the War. But still their resources to support it are great indeed, and equal to the longest struggle, for they are adequate to the extent of those confiscations, the severity of which we so justly condemn. In the course of this struggle, therefore, it is probable, that the means and the patience of the English people will be first exhausted; and then awaking from their dreams of glory and vengeance, they will see the precipice of National Bankruptcy just before them; and whether, at that moment, the acquisition of three or four Sugar Islands will appear a sufficient compensation for the miseries felt and apprehended, is a question to which the true answer is sufficiently obvious. Men enriched by the official emoluments of a War, men thriving under the patronage of the Crown, increased by the New Establishments, civil and military, in the conquered Islands, will think it a fortunate War for them; but the great body of the nation will feel itself impoverished and undone by its victories; their property they will perceive has been devoured by that very measure which will have fed the now dangerous influence of the Crown to a truly formidable size. The alarm for the Liberty of Britain will again become universal, as it was some years before the close of the Civil War with America; and that alarm, combined with the causes of discontent already existing in the country, may too probably produce a degree of popular effervescence

much surpassing what was then experienced. I intreat you, Sir, once more to attend to these perilous circumstances, to consider the actual situation of Ireland, the unsatisfied claims of America, her attachment to France, and the probability, the certainty, I had almost said, that if the danger of her Ally should become extreme by the junction of Britain and Holland, with the great Continental Powers combined against her, she will repay her debt of gratitude to France by defending the Liberty of that Country to which she owes her own: And, after having taken a comprehensive survey of all these alarming circumstances, then say, if you can, that the prospect does not appall you.

I have now, Sir, communicated my reasons for disapproving the intended War with France, and also some other parts of your conduct as a Member of the Cabinet, and an Individual Member of Parliament. For the freedom of this Address, you will think no apology necessary; you will readily ascribe it to its true cause. My motives, I am confident, you cannot but approve, however my arguments may fail to make the desired impression on your mind. I conclude this letter, I must own, with much fainter hopes than I began it, that a rupture with France may yet be prevented. The Ministers of that Country had made repeated overtures of conciliation to the Cabinet of London; they were evidently unwilling to enter into Hostilities against the British nation. And you, Sir, in your speech
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in Parliament on the 1st of February, appeared willing, to the last moment, to listen to terms of accommodation. From these circumstances, the hope was still cherished, not only that a War between Britain and France might be averted, but that, by your wise and humane intercession, the general tranquillity of Europe also might be restored.

But the events of a few days have almost totally destroyed the possibility of an accommodation. The embargo laid upon British vessels in the ports of France, the unfortunate consequence of the dismissal of M. Chauvelin; and, upon that intelligence, the more unfortunate order to M. Maret to depart the kingdom, * without having been permitted to state the fresh overtures of pacification, the fresh proofs of their respect for this Country, and their desire to continue in amity with it, with which he was charged by the Executive Government of France, seem hardly to leave the shadow of a hope, that Peace can be preserved. If a War be commenced, it is my earnest prayer, that Providence may be pleased to shorten the calamities which await this devoted Country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient and most humble servant,
C. WYVILL.

To the Right Hon. }
WILLIAM PITT. }

* So this transaction is understood at present.—I should be extremely glad to find it is a mistake.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

SOCIETY of FRIENDS of the PEOPLE,

IN THE YEAR 1792.

With their Reports on the State of Representation of England and Scotland; Petitions and other Papers respecting the Motion of CHARLES GREY, Esq; on the 6th of May, 1793, for effecting a Reformation of Parliament.

Declaration agreed to on the 11th of April, 1792, by the Society entitled the Friends of the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform.

“ **A** Number of Persons having seriously re-
“ viewed and considered the actual situa-
“ tion of public affairs, and state of the king-
“ dom, and having communicated to each other
“ their opinions on these subjects, have agreed
“ and determined to institute a Society for the
“ purpose

“ purpose of proposing to Parliament and to
 “ the Country, and of promoting to the utmost
 “ of their power, the following Constitutional
 “ Objects, making the preservation of the Con-
 “ stitution, on its true principles, the foundation
 “ of all their proceedings.

First.—“ To restore the Freedom of Election,
 “ and a more equal Representation of the Peo-
 “ ple in Parliament.

Secondly.—To secure to the People a more
 “ frequent exercise of their Right of Electing
 “ their Representatives.

“ The Persons who have signed their names
 “ to this agreement, think that these two funda-
 “ mental measures will furnish the power and
 “ the means of correcting the abuses, which
 “ appear to them to have arisen from a neglect
 “ of the acknowledged Principles of the Con-
 “ stitution, and of accomplishing those subor-
 “ dinate Objects of Reform, which they deem
 “ to be essential to the Liberties of the People,
 “ and to the good Government of the King-
 “ dom.”

SIGNED BY

Charles Grey, Esq; M. P.
 Hon. Thos. Maitland, M. P.
 George Rous, Esq;
 William Cuninghame, Esq;
 John Tweddell, Esq;
 Earl of Lauderdale,
 Nicolls Raynsford, Esq;
 James Mackintosh, Esq;
 Thomas Christie, Esq;

Malcolm Laing, Esq;
 Right Hon. Lord Kinnaird
 James Archdekin, Esq;
 William Harwood, Esq;
 David Godfrey, Esq;
 Higgins Eden, Esq;
 Philip Francis, Esq; M. P.
 Charles Goring, Esq;
 John Hurford Stone, Esq;
 W. H. Lambton,

W. H. Lambton, Esq; M. P.
 John Godfrey, Esq;
 George Tierney, Esq;
 Arthur Piggott, Esq;
 J. B. Church, Esq; M. P.
 Gilbert Ironside, Esq;
 T. B. Hollis, Esq;
 S. Whitbread, jun. Esq; M. P.
 Sir J. Throckmorton, Bart.
 M. A. Taylor, Esq; M. P.
 William Bretton, Esq;
 Thomas Rogers, Esq;
 Hon. Thomas Erskine, M. P.
 R. Knight, Esq;
 Thos. Thompson, Esq; M. P.
 Colonel Tarleton, M. P.
 Mr. Serjeant Bond,
 William Lushington, Esq;
 Samuel Rogers, Esq;
 Peregrine Dealtry, Esq;
 R. B. Sheridan, Esq; M. P.
 William Fullarton, Esq;
 Norman Macleod, Esq; M. P.
 James Losh, Esq;
 Mr. Aldm. Sawbridge, M. P.
 Richard Weld, Esq;
 John Claridge, Esq;
 John Wharton, Esq; M. P.
 James Martin, Esq; M. P.
 William Smith, Esq; M. P.
 John Scott, Esq; M. P.
 Sir Bellingham Graham, Bart.
 George Byng, Esq; M. P.
 John Cartwright, Esq;
 Jer. Batley, Esq;
 Ralph Carr, jun. Esq;
 Ralph Milbanke, Esq; M. P.
 Henry Howard, Esq;
 B. E. Howard, Esq;
 E. B. Clive, Esq;
 Henry Howard, Esq; M. P.
 John Leach, Esq;
 John Nicholls, Esq;
 Joseph Richardson, Esq;
 John Towgood, Esq;
 William Chisholm, Esq;
 John Fazakerley, Esq;
 Richard S. Milnes, Esq; M. P.
 Samuel Shore, Esq;
 Samuel Shore, jun. Esq;
 Charles Warren, Esq;
 Long Kingsman, Esq;
 Edward Jer. Curteis, Esq;
 Samuel Long, Esq; M. P.
 John Bourdieu, Esq;
 T. B. Rous, Esq;
 D. O'Brien, Esq;
 J. Lodge Batley, Esq;
 James West, Esq;
 Rich. Carpenter Smith, Esq;
 W. Powlett Powlett, Esq; M. P.
 George Livius, Esq;
 Right Hon. Lord Daer,
 Hon. John Douglas,
 Rev. Dr. Kippis,
 James Jacque, Esq;
 Francis Love Beckford, Esq;
 Adam Walker, Esq;
 Richard Sharp, Esq;
 Rev. Dr. Joseph Towers,
 John Furnell Tuffen, Esq;
 John Clerk, Esq;
 Thomas Bell, Esq;
 John Wilson, Esq;
 Andrew Stirling, Esq;
 Richard Heaviside, Esq;
 Mr. Alderman Combe,
 Robert Merry, Esq;
 George Shum, Esq;
 J. G. Lemaitre, Esq;
 James Perry, Esq;
 Henry Clifford, Esq;
 John Crookshanks, Esq;
 John Pratt, Esq;
 W. Maxwell, Esq;
 T. Hill, Esq;
 J. C. Bentley, Esq;
 Thomas Bell, jun. Esq;
 Richard Wilson, Esq;
 Mr. J. Jarvis,
 C. F. Ward, Esq;
 Rev. C. Powlett,
 William White, Esq;
 T. Holt White, Esq;
 W. Stone, Esq;
 Joshua Grigby, Esq;
 Robert Aitken, Esq;
 Joseph Spurrell, Esq;

Thomas

Thomas Nevill, Esq;
T. Rutt, Esq;
Rob. Slade, Esq;
Fran. Kemble, Esq;
William Sharp, Esq;
John Barnes, Esq;
Joseph Ruse, Esq;
T. Gordon, Esq;
Mr. J. Griffin,
Mr. Edward Hall,
William Bosville, Esq;

John Redman, Esq;
J. Philips, Esq;
J. Porter, Esq;
J. B. Gawler, Esq;
Rev. J. C. Banks,
Bertie Greathead, Esq;
Thomas Crookenden, Esq;
Ben. Bakewell, Esq;
Col. Hastings,
D. E. Macdonnel, Esq.

NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS who have signed the DECLARATION.

Right Hon. the Earl of Buchan, *Scotland*.
Sir J. E. Swinburne, Bart. *Northumberland*.
Professor Millar, *Glasgow*.
G. Lloyd, Esq; *Suffolk*.
W. Belham, Esq; *Bedford*.
Capel Loft, Esq; *Suffolk*.
W. Davy, Esq; *Devonshire*.
James Milnes, Esq; *Yorkshire*.
Robert Monteith, Esq; *Glasgow*.
J. Richardson, Esq; *Glasgow*.
J. Losh, Esq; *Cumberland*.
J. Grigby, jun. Esq; *Suffolk*.

TREASURERS.

Right Honourable Lord Kinnaird.
George Tierney, Esq;

REGULATIONS.

REGULATIONS.

I. **R**ESOLVED, That the title of this Society be, *THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform.*

II. That the Declaration agreed upon at the Meeting of the 11th of *April*, 1792, expresses the political objects of this Society.

III. That no person be capable of becoming a Member of this Society until he has expressed his Assent, by subscribing his name to the above-mentioned Declaration.

IV. That every Candidate for admission to this Society shall be proposed and seconded by two of its Members, and ballotted for at the succeeding Meeting.

V. That the Election of Members shall be by Ballott, and that no Candidate shall be deemed duly elected, unless it shall appear that he is chosen by nine-tenths of the Members present.

VI. That until the Society shall consist of one hundred and fifty Members, no Ballott shall be taken, or other business begun, unless a number, not less than one third of the Members of the Society be present.

VII. That a General Meeting of this Society be held at *Freemasons' Tavern*, at one o'clock in the forenoon, on the first *Saturday* in every month, during the Sitting of Parliament.

VIII. That

VIII. That the Members of this Society be duly summoned to every General Meeting, and that for that purpose they enter their places of abode in a book, to be kept by the Committee.

IX. That a Committee, consisting of twelve Persons, be appointed, one fourth of which shall be replaced by Election, at each General Meeting of the Society.

X. That this Committee be empowered to conduct the ordinary correspondence with all Individuals or Societies, desirous of promoting the Cause of Parliamentary Reform.

XI. That the duty of this Committee shall be to prepare such business as shall appear to them fit to be laid before the General Meetings of the Society; and that they shall be requested to draw up such Resolutions as they shall deem proper to be submitted to their consideration.

XII. That this Committee be hereby enjoined strictly to conform in all their correspondence, or other communications, to the principles contained in the Declaration of the 11th of April, 1792.

XIII. That such Committee have power and authority to regulate the mode of their own proceeding, conforming to the general rules and occasional instructions of the Society, and also to employ any Clerks at the expence of the Society, and to draw upon the Treasurer for any sums which they may find necessary for their proceedings.

XIV. That

XIV. That it be a general instruction to the Committee, in their correspondence, to advise all Friends of Parliamentary Reform, to form themselves into similar Societies, on similar principles, in all parts of the Kingdom; and that a copy of the Declaration of the 11th of April, be transmitted to all such Societies.

XV. That, to defray the necessary expences of the Society, each Member shall, on his admission, pay to the Treasurer, *Two Guineas and a Half*, and continue the same payment annually, computed from Lady-Day, 1792.

XVI. That two Treasurers shall be annually appointed to receive the Contributions of the Members, and that they shall be empowered to issue money upon the order of the Committee, or the vote of a General Meeting.

XVII. That the Committee be empowered to call extraordinary Meetings of the Society, giving as much previous notice to the Members as the exigency of the business may permit.

XVIII. That, in order to promote the Establishment of similar Societies in other parts of the Kingdom, one hundred non-resident Members shall be admitted into this Society, being proposed and chosen according to the rules of balloting.

XIX. That such non-resident Members shall subscribe one guinea annually, to the General Fund: and a written authority, for inserting their names in the books of the Society, shall
be

be lodged in the hands of the Secretary by the proposing Member. Such Members during their occasional residence in London, and attendance on the Society, being entitled to all the Rights of ordinary Members.

XX. That such non-resident Members shall sign the Declaration of this Society, of the 11th of April, 1792, subjoined as follows:

I agree fully to the principles expressed in the above Declaration of the 11th of April, 1792, by the Society of the Friends of the People, and am desirous of being admitted into the Association as a non-resident Member, my residence at a distance from London preventing my attendance on the ordinary Meetings of the Society.

(Signed)

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, 26th April, 1792.

At a General Meeting of the Society established on the 11th instant, under the title of the Friends of the People, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform,

W. H. LAMBTON, Esq; M. P. in the Chair,

READ the draught of an Address to the People of Great Britain, contained in the Report of the Committee.

Resolved

Resolved unanimously,

That the said Address is approved of and adopted by this Meeting, and that it be printed.

ADDRESS to the PEOPLE of GREAT BRITAIN.

NO man, who is not ready to express his concurrence in our principles by signing the Declaration, can be admitted into our Society.—The objects of it, as we conceive, are of a nature at all times fit to be pursued and recommended to the Country. At different periods they have heretofore been avowed and supported by the highest authorities in this kingdom; by eminent individuals, and considerable bodies of men; by Mr. Locke and Judge Blackstone; by the late Earl of Chatham, and Sir George Savile; by the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Lansdown, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox; by Petitions from several Counties, and by repeated Declarations from the City of London.

In appealing to the avowed opinions of men of established reputation, or of distinguished rank in their Country, we do not mean to strengthen the reason or enforce the necessity of the measure we propose, so much as to obviate all personal imputations, which the enemies of the cause will be ready to throw upon those

those who support it. It is not, that on our account, we dread the effect or regard the impression, which such imputations may produce. But we think it material to the credit and success of our proceedings to shew, that we are not aiming at Reforms unthought of by wise and virtuous men; that our opinions neither possess the advantage, nor are liable to the objection of novelty; and that we cannot be accused or suspected of factious purposes, or dangerous designs without extending the same accusation or suspicion to the motives of men, whose situation and property, independent of their character, principles, and abilities, have given them a most important stake in the peace and good government of the kingdom.

Convinced by our own reflections, by experience, and by authority, that the thing we propose to do, is fit to be done, we have, with equal deliberation, weighed the reasons that may recommend, or be objected to the present time, as the most or least proper for bringing it forward. On this point, we have no address to make, to the determined enemies of a Reform of every kind. Their objection, whether valid, or not, is to the substance of the measure, and cannot be abated by circumstances. To those who concur generally in the principle, but who may be inclined by particular reasons to defer the attempt, we seriously wish to submit the following considerations: that admitting

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this

this to be a season of general tranquillity in the country, it is, on that account, the more proper for temperate reflection, and prudent exertions to accomplish any necessary improvement;—it is the time when practical measures for that purpose, are most likely to be adopted with discretion and pursued with moderation. If we are persuaded to wait for other times, of a different complexion, for times of public complaint, or general discontent, we shall then be told, that general remedies are not fit to be proposed in the moment of particular disorder, and that it is our duty to wait for the return of quiet days, unless we mean to create or increase confusion in the country. The result of this dilemma, if it be suffered to prevail, is pure and absolute inactivity at present, and for ever. On the other hand, if it be true, as we are convinced it is, that in this general appearance of tranquillity, there is some mixture of discontent, as well as of strong and well grounded opinion, on the subject of abuses in the Government, and corruptions of the Constitution, we wish it to be considered by men, whose judgment has been formed or enlightened by experience, and whose actions are most likely to be directed by prudence, whether in taking proper measures to remove the cause and objects of such discontent, and opinion, the choice of the time be not a material part of the measure; and whether the earliest time that can be taken for preventing

venting the increase of an existing evil, be not the safest and the best?

The example and situation of another kingdom, are held out to deter us from innovations of any kind. We say, that the Reforms we have in view are not innovations. Our intention is not to change, but to restore; not to displace, but to re-instate the Constitution upon its true principles, and original ground. In the conduct of persons most likely to reproach us with a spirit of innovation, we see a solid ground for retorting the imputation. Their professions of admiration of the beauty, and of zeal for the security of the Constitution, appear to us too lavish to be sincere, especially when compared with those practical violations, with which they suffer this beautiful system to be invaded, and to which they never refuse to give their concurrence. They will not innovate, but they are no enemies to gradual decay; as if the changes insensibly produced by time and nourished by neglect, were not in effect the most dangerous innovations. But what security have we, that the dispositions of such men are not something worse than passive? How are we assured that, in praising the Constitution, their intention is not to adorn a victim, which they wish to sacrifice, or to flatter the beauty they are endeavouring to corrupt? Let their intention be what it may, we answer their accusation in the words of one of the wisest of mankind:

P 2

“ • THAT

“ * THAT TIME IS THE GREATEST IN-
 “ NOVATOR ; AND IF TIME OF COURSE
 “ ALTER THINGS TO THE WORSE, AND
 “ IF WISDOM AND COUNSEL SHALL NOT
 “ ALTER THEM TO THE BETTER, WHAT
 “ SHALL BE THE END ? ”

By the Reform proposed by Lord Chatham †, he declared in the House of Lords, that he meant *to infuse a portion of new health into the Constitution.* The Duke of Richmond has declared §, that “ his reasons in favour of a Parliamentary Re-
 “ form were formed on the experience of
 “ twenty-six years, which, whether in or out
 “ of Government, had equally convinced him,
 “ that the restoration of a genuine House of Commons,
 “ by a renovation of the Rights of the People, was
 “ the only remedy against that System of Corruption,
 “ which had brought the Nation to disgrace and po-
 “ verty, and threatened it with the loss of Liberty.”

Other authorities, in favour of a Parliamen-
 tary Reform, as direct and explicit as these,
 might be quoted in abundance. The public is
 possessed of them. We rather wish to encoun-
 ter, because we are sure we can efface, in every
 rational mind, the impression which may have
 been made by a view of those events, which
 have attended a total change in the Constitu-
 tion of France. WE DENY THE EXISTENCE
 OF ANY RESEMBLANCE WHATEVER BE-

* Lord Bacon;

† Jan. 22, 1770.

§ Jan. 17, 1783.

TWEEN THE CASES OF THE TWO KINGDOMS; AND WE UTTERLY DISCLAIM THE NECESSITY OF RESORTING TO SIMILAR REMEDIES. We do not believe that, at this day, an absolute avowed despotism, in the hands of the Executive Power, would be endured in this Country. But who can say, to what conclusion the silent unresisted operation of abuses, incessantly acting and constantly increasing, may lead us hereafter; what habits it may gradually create; what power it may finally establish? The abuses in the Government of France were suffered to gather and accumulate, until nothing but an eruption could put an end to them. The discontent of the People was converted into despair. Preventive remedies were either not thought of in time, or were not proposed until it was too late to apply them with effect. The subversion of the ancient Government ensued. The inference from this comparison is at once so powerful and so obvious, that we know not by what argument to illustrate or enforce it. We mean to avert for ever from our Country the calamities inseparable from such convulsions. If there be, as it is said, in any part of this kingdom, a disposition to promote confusion, or even to arrive at improvement by unconstitutional and irregular courses, we hold ourselves as strictly pledged to resist that disposition, wherever it may appear, as to pursue our own objects by

unexceptionable methods. If on the contrary it be true, that the mass of the People are satisfied with the present state of things, or indifferent about it; if they approve of the Representation as it stands, the Form of Election, and the Duration of the Trust; or if condemning these things, they are determined, from indolence or despair, not to attempt to correct them; then indeed the efforts of individuals may be ineffectual, but they cannot be injurious to the peace of the community. If the spirit of the Constitution be dead in the hearts of the People, no human industry can revive it. To affirm, that extensive mischief may be done by a statement of facts or arguments, which make no general impression on the public mind, is a proposition that contradicts itself, and requires no other refutation. We trust it will be proved by experiment, that these inconsistent assertions are equally unfounded, and that the People of this Country are no more disposed to submit to abuses without complaint, than to look for redress in any proceedings repugnant to the Laws, or unwarranted by the Constitution. Between anarchy and despotism, speaking for ourselves, we have no choice to make;—we have no preference to give. We neither admit the necessity, nor can we endure the idea of resorting to either of these extremities as a refuge from the other. The course we are determined to pursue, is equally distant from both.

Finally,

Finally, we assert, that it must be blindness not to see, and treachery not to acknowledge,

That “*the instruments of power are not perhaps so open and avowed as they formerly were, and therefore are the less liable to jealous and invidious reflections; but they are not the weaker upon that account. In short, our National Debts and Taxes have, in their natural consequences, thrown such a weight of power into the Executive Scale of Government, as we cannot think was intended by our Patriot Ancestors, who gloriously struggled for the Abolition of the then formidable parts of the Prerogative, and by an unaccountable want of foresight, established this System in their stead.*”—Our general object is to recover and preserve the true balance of the Constitution.

THESE ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR ASSOCIATION, and, on our steady adherence to them, we look with a just confidence to the approbation and support of the people in the prosecution of our object. A measure, so likely to be opposed by the united strength of various interests, can never succeed, but by the declared and hearty concurrence of the Nation.

Resolved unanimously,

That a motion be made in the House of Commons, at an early period in the next Session of Parliament, for introducing a Parliamentary Reform.

Resolved unanimously,

That Charles Grey, Esq; be requested to
P 4 make,

* Blackstone.

make, and the Hon. Thomas Erskine to second,
the above motion.

SIGNED,

By the Unanimous Order of the Meeting,

W. H. LAMBTON, CHAIRMAN.

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, *Saturday, May 31st, 1797.*

WILLIAM BAKER, Esq; M. P. in the Chair,

Right Hon. Lord JOHN RUSSELL, M. P.
Deputy-Chairman,

MR. BAKER, from the Committee, brought
up the following Resolutions, which were
agreed to by the Society.

Resolved, That it appears to this Meeting,
that a formal notice having been given in the
House of Commons, on Monday the 30th of
April, by Charles Grey, Esq; of his intention
to bring forward, at an early period in the next
Session of Parliament, a motion for a Parliamen-
tary Reform, occasion has since been taken to
throw out and propagate a variety of asper-
sions, equally groundless in substance, and op-
probrious in terms, against the motives, objects
and proceedings of this Association.

Resolved,

Resolved, That although we are of opinion that the true objects of our institution have been clearly defined, and distinctly expressed in our Declaration, and Address, it may nevertheless be adviseable to encounter and repel the calumnies, with which we have been attacked, by the following observations, which we willingly submit to the cool and impartial judgment of our Country.

That, whereas it is objected generally by persons, who have not yet ventured to deny the necessity of a Reform in the actual Representation of the People, at some proper but undetermined period, that the time we have taken, and the mode we have adopted, for bringing forward the measure, are likely to produce the most dangerous consequences in the country; we say that the arguments, which determined us in the choice of the time, have been fully stated in our Address, but have been no where answered, nor at all fairly considered. This objection is urged and relied on, as if it had not been foreseen and anticipated. We must content ourselves therefore with re-asserting that a season of quiet and prosperity is the most proper for mild and temperate discussion, as well as for taking moderate and reasonable securities for the future; and that the choice of such a time is alone sufficient to clear us of any intention to promote popular discontent. But we understand it has been particularly asserted that
the

the present time is improper, because no specific grievance exists ; whereas the period, when former proposals for Reform were offered to Parliament, was perfectly proper, because a grievance did then subsist in the American war ; the origin, the continuance, and the calamities of which were attributed to, or supposed to be connected with the imperfect and corrupted state of the Representation of the People in Parliament.

We do not admit that the immediate non-existence of grievances, which the acknowledged corruption of the institution is at all times equally capable of producing, is any objection against taking securities to prevent the return of such grievances. But we positively affirm, that in fact, a case has lately occurred, which, on the very principles of the objection, establishes the necessity of a Reform in the construction of the House of Commons. We mean the late Armament intended to act against Russia, which might have involved the Nation in a most impolitic and ruinous war ; and to which a large majority of the House of Commons gave their support, in direct contradiction to the real interests, and to the acknowledged sense of the people. With respect to the mode of our proceeding, we conceive that the objections urged against it, ought to have been as precise, as specific, as the reasons we have as-
signed

signed in support of it. Instead of comparing the principles we profess with those of the Constitution; instead of canvassing the terms of our Declaration, and proving a contradiction between our professions and our conduct, it is thought fit to load us with a loose, unsupported, general charge, expressed in the language of reproach, not of argument; of uniting with certain bodies of men, whose principles and practice, as far as they appear to be such as they are represented, we have not only disclaimed in the strongest terms, but have declared, that we are determined to resist to the utmost of our ability. Not a single proposition, not one sentence, nor even a word in the Declaration and Address, which we have submitted to the public, has been pointed out as liable to an objection of any kind. We do believe, that the minds of men are every day more and more enlightened on the subject of the Constitution and Government of their Country, as well as more attentive to it, than in former times.—

That disposition has not been created by any efforts of ours. We are of opinion, that it exists very generally throughout this Kingdom. *Is it useful to discourage, is it possible to suppress it?* We earnestly recommend it to those, who wish well to the Peace of the Kingdom, to consider seriously, whether under the acknowledged existence of abuses, a declared resistance to every proposal
for

for amendment, may not in the event, prove favourable to the views of men, whose principles are destructive of all good Government, and wholly irreconcilable with the object of our Association.

Before the Motion, to which one of our Members, in compliance with the request of the Society, has pledged himself, can be made, we hope the sense of our Country, will be distinctly expressed. If, after having done every thing in our power, to obtain a Reform, which we think wanting, the country shall appear to be satisfied with the present state of the Representation, we must and shall submit. If, on the contrary, the propriety of our measures shall appear to be generally felt and acknowledged, we shall hold ourselves bound to use every legal and constitutional means of effecting a timely and temperate Reform; the only one which we can propose, and the only one to which we will give our concurrence. Whenever that object is attained, our Association *is at an end*—WE GO NO FURTHER.—The people then will possess a more perfect organ to express their sentiments, and a power to correct those abuses, which we call *subordinate*, and which we believe to proceed principally from the present depraved state of the Representation of the People in Parliament.

Resolved, That the above Resolutions, proposed by the Committee, be agreed to, and adopted

adopted by the Society, and that the Committee be instructed to publish the same.

Signed, By Order of the Society,

WILLIAM BAKER, M. P. Chairman.

FREEMASONS' TAYERN, Saturday, May 12, 1792.

**Right Hon. Lord JOHN RUSSELL, M. P.
Chairman.**

**GEORGE BYNG, Esq; M. P.
Deputy Chairman.**

THE following letter, received at the last Meeting, from the Society for Constitutional Information, and then ordered to be reported upon by the Committee, was again read.

“SIR,

“By the Society for Constitutional Information, I am commanded to express to you the satisfaction that its Members feel on the institution of your Society.

“That the House of Commons itself, which is the very subject to be reformed, should have furnished a part of the strength of this new institution, may ultimately afford important

"tant advantages to the Public. But it must
 "not, Sir, be disguised, that at first this circum-
 "stance will necessarily be accompanied with
 "doubts, with suspicions, with apprehensions.
 "It is not, Sir, the first time that Members of
 "that House have professed themselves Reform-
 "ers. It is not the first time that they have en-
 "tered into popular Associations; but, should
 "they on this occasion, prove faithfully instru-
 "mental in effecting a substantial Reform in
 "the Representation of the People, and the du-
 "ration of Parliaments, it *will* be the first time
 "that the Nation hath not found itself in an
 "error, when it placed confidence in Associated
 "Members of Parliament, for the recovery of
 "the Constitutional and Inestimable Rights of
 "the People. The long lost Rights of Repre-
 "sentation are Rights, Sir, which, in truth, are
 "not to be recovered but by the exertions and
 "unanimity of the People themselves. Impres-
 "sed with this great truth, it has been an inva-
 "riable object of this Society, *to revive in the*
 "*minds of the Commonalty at large a knowledge of*
 "*their lost Rights, respecting the Election and dura-*
 "*tion of the Representative Body;* and we doubt
 "not that your Society will see the wisdom of
 "pursuing a like course. May it taste the de-
 "light of diffusing this knowledge! May it reap
 "the honour of calling forth the energies of
 "the Nation!

"When

" When this Society, Sir, contemplates that
 " flood of light and truth, which, under a be-
 " nign Providence, is now sweeping from the
 " earth despotism in all its forms, and infringe-
 " ment of rights in all its degrees; to make
 " way for freedom, justice, peace, and human
 " happiness; and when it sees your Society an-
 " nounce itself to the world, as the Friends of
 " the People, it rests assured, that this new insti-
 " tution abundantly partakes of that light, that
 " it embraces that truth, and that it will act up
 " to the sacredness of that friendship which it
 " professes, by nobly casting from it with dis-
 " dain all aristocratic reserves, and fairly and
 " honestly contending for the People's Rights
 " in their full extent. Here, Sir, be assured,
 " lies all your strength. You may boast of
 " names, of wealth, of talents, and even of
 " principles, but without the fellowship of the
 " People, *understanding and feeling their immediate*
 " *interest in the contest*, your Association, when-
 " ever it grapples with that powerful despotism
 " to which it is opposed, and to which a consti-
 " tutional cloak serves as shield and armour,
 " will most assuredly crumble to dust.

" Here, Sir, it is with peculiar satisfaction,
 " that the Society for Constitutional Informa-
 " can express its belief that to its own unequi-
 " vocal "*Declaration of Rights, without which no*
 " *Englishman can be a Freeman, nor the English Na-*
 " *tion a free People,*" it owes that confidence on
 " the

" the part of all true friends to a substantial Re-
 " form of Parliament, which in all periods of
 " the Society's existence, it has invariably ex-
 " perience. This short Declaration, contain-
 " ing no more than four distinct propositions,
 " satisfied the People that the Society assumed
 " not the Office of Reformer, without knowing
 " with precision what wanted Reform; nor the
 " character of friend, without manifesting that
 " sincerity which gave proof of its attachment.
 " It left to such Reformers as Mr. Burke to
 " talk of the People's Liberties; and at the same
 " time to deny, or explain away their Rights.

" This Society, Sir, trusts that the purity of
 " principle, which actuated individual Mem-
 " bers of Parliament, who joined the Associa-
 " tions that have been spoken of, will in no
 " degree be affected by the observations that
 " have been made upon the inefficiency of those
 " Associations; but convinced that a strong im-
 " pression still remains upon the minds of the
 " People, that in general, persons who have long
 " been accustomed to hold seats in the House of
 " Commons under the present abuses in the
 " Representation, and whose connections are all
 " Aristocratic, must be almost more than men,
 " at once, and completely, to sacrifice both pre-
 " judice and unwarranted power at the Altar of
 " Freedom. This Society, convinced, I say,
 " Sir, of the existence of this impression, would
 " not suffer its delicacy to stand in the way of
 " its

"its duty on this important occasion; but de-
 "termined with the frankness, belonging to
 "sincere affection, to warn its new brethren
 "against a danger, to which they might other-
 "wise become exposed through mere inadver-
 "tency.

"That the distinguished persons who have
 "adorned the Senate, and now adorn your
 "Society, may be found equal to the sublime
 "effort of virtue which their situation now de-
 "mands; and may on that account receive the
 "blessings of their country and of mankind to
 "the latest posterity, is the sincere, the ardent
 "wish of the Society for Constitutional In-
 "formation, in whose name I have the honour
 "to subscribe myself, with great regard,

"SIR,

"Your most obedient humble servant,
 (Signed)

"JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Chairman."

TOOK'S-COURT, April 27, 1793.

"To the President of the Society,
 "entitled, *The Friends of the Pro-*
 "*ple, associated for the purpose of ob-*
 "*taining a Parliamentary Reform.*"

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William

William Baker, Esq; Mr. P. Chairman, reported from the Committee, the following answer, which they proposed to the adoption of the Society:

"SIR,

"Fully sensible that the Society for Constitutional Information have made no sacrifice to delicacy in their Address to us, we, on our part, shall affect no disguise. Voluntary Associations not being armed with public authority, have no force but that of truth, no hope of success, but in the strength of reason, and the concurrence of the public.

"We profess not to entertain a wish, *"that the great plans of public benefit, which Mr. Paine has so powerfully recommended, will speedily be carried into effect"*; nor to amuse our fellow-citizens with the magnificent promise of obtaining for them the "Rights † of the People in their full extent," the indefinite language of delusion, which by opening unbounded prospects of political adventure, tends to destroy that public opinion, which is the support of all free Governments, and to excite a spirit of innovation, of which no wisdom can foresee the

* For these exact words, see the Resolutions of the Manchester Society, published by the Society for Constitutional Information, in the Morning Chronicle of the 16th of April, 1792.

† The words of their letter, signed J. CARTWRIGHT.

effect,

effect, and no skill direct the course. We view man as he is : the creature of habit as well as of reason. We think it therefore our bounden duty to propose no extreme changes, which, however specious in theory, can never be accomplished without violence to the settled opinions of mankind, nor attempted without endangering some of the most estimable advantages which we confessedly enjoy. We are convinced that the people bear a fixed attachment to the happy form of our Government, and the genuine Principles of our Constitution. These we cherish as objects of just affection, not from any implicit reverence or habitual superstition, but as institutions best calculated to produce the happiness of man in Civil Society ;—and it is because we are convinced that abuses are undermining and corrupting them, that we have associated for the preservation of those principles. We wish to *Reform* the Constitution, because we wish to *preserve* it.

“ Associations formed in the face of Power, in opposition to the interests of our present Legislators, evince that *individual security*, and *personal independence*, are already established by our laws. The immense accumulation of debt, the enormous taxation of seventeen millions of annual revenue, demonstrate that the *collective* interests of the Community have been neglected or betrayed. We believe the defective Constitution of the Assembly entrusted with the Pub-

lic Purse to be the real source of this evil.— With this view we have pledged ourselves to attempt a timely and salutary Reform; adhering in every measure, we may take to the fundamental principles of the Constitution. According to those acknowledged principles, the People have a perfect right to possess an organ by which the public mind may speak in legislation; and to bind their Representatives to the interests of the whole Community, by a frequent renovation of the trust. These objects accomplished, we believe abuses will find no protection in a genuine Representation of the People; that regulations best adapted to the public happiness will be gradually infused into our laws, through the known channels of Legislation, and that the agitated minds of men, resuming their confidence in Parliament, will subside into a calm expectation of redress, without forgetting the principles, or violating the forms of the Constitution.

“ These, as we think, are the views of men detesting anarchy, yet sincere FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE. Your letter appears to us to be written with a view to create distrust of our designs; to insinuate doubts of our sincerity, and to excite an early suspicion of our principles in the minds of the People. We have not, however, refused in answer to disclaim what we condemn, and to avow our real objects, from the pursuit of which, we will not suffer ourselves

selves to be diverted by any controversy. We must beg leave at the same time to decline all future intercourse with a Society whose views and objects, as far as we can collect them from the various Resolutions and Proceedings which have been published, we cannot help regarding as irreconcilable with those real interests on which you profess to inform and enlighten the People.

" Signed in the name,

" And by order of the Society,

" JOHN RUSSELL, Chairman."

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, May 12, 1793.

" To JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq; Chair-

" man of the Society for Constitu-

" tional Information."

Resolved, That the Society do approve and adopt the answer proposed by the Committee to the Letter of the Society for Constitutional Information.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this day, including the Letter of the Society for Constitutional Information, and the Answer of this Society to it, be printed and published.

Resolved, That, together with the Answer of this Society to the Society for Constitutional Information, there be transmitted to John Cartwright, Esq; Chairman of that Society, a copy

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of the Resolution of the Friends of the People,
to print and publish the Letter and Reply.

By Order of the Meeting,

(Signed) JOHN RUSSELL, Chairman.

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, June 2, 1791.

At a General Meeting of the Society of the
Friends of the People, associated for the pur-
pose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform
held this day,—

Sir JOHN THROCKMORTON, Bart.,
Chairman.

JOHN WHARTON, Esq; M. P. Deputy
Chairman.

Resolved unanimously,

THAT the thanks of this Society be given to
Charles Grey, Esq; for his able and manly
defence of this Institution in the House of Com-
mons, on the 25th of May, and for the just
severity with which he exposed the dereliction
of the Cause of the People, by those who here-
tofore professed themselves Advocates for Par-
liamentary Reform.

Resolved

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Society be given to the *Right Hon. Charles James Fox*, for his steady adherence to the cause of the People, and for his able and eloquent support of the amendment, moved by *Charles Grey, Esq;* to the Address of the House of Commons, on the 25th of May—an amendment which teaches Magistrates to afford an equal protection to the civil Rights of Men of all denominations, and combines the Peace and Order of Society, with the Liberty and Happiness of the People.

Resolved unanimously, That the Thanks of this Society be given to those Members of the House of Commons, who, upon the same occasion, joined their efforts, and so ably and eloquently supported *Mr. Grey's* amendment.

Resolved unanimously, That the Thanks of this Society be given to the Right Honourable the *Earl of Lauderdale*, for his able and manly defence of this Institution in the House of Lords, on the 31st of May; and for the just severity with which he exposed the dereliction of the cause of the People, by those who heretofore professed themselves advocates for Parliamentary Reform.

Resolved unanimously, That the Thanks of this Society be given to the Most Noble the *Marquis of Landsdowne*, for his consistent conduct in the cause of Parliamentary Reform, and for the support, which, with so much ability

and eloquence he gave to the amendment proposed by the *Earl of Lauderdale*.

Resolved unanimously, That a copy of the second Resolution be transmitted by the Chairman of this Meeting, to the Right Hon *Charles James Fox*; and that a copy of the fifth Resolution be also sent by him to the *Marquis of Lansdowne*.

Resolved unanimously, That a Proclamation of the Crown, cannot restrain or impeach that freedom in the discussion of Political Subjects, which is essential to the preservation of Public Liberty, congenial to the Spirit of the British Constitution, and the birth-right of Britons established by their Laws.

Resolved unanimously, That the late Proclamation appears to this Society unnecessary; because those who under pretence of exercising this right of political discussion, intentionally vilify the Government, and create disaffection in the mind of the people, are liable to prosecution, and may be punished in the Courts of Law; but that all measures which have a tendency to prejudice the cause even of these offenders before trial are highly improper.

Resolved unanimously, That a Proclamation professing to be directed against the authors and publishers of such writings; but so indefinitely expressed as to leave a doubt whether other persons, whose principles and proceedings, even malice itself, cannot find a ground to attack,
were

were the real objects; is of dangerous example in the Government of a Free People.

Resolved unanimously, That this Society conscious of the integrity of their motives, are determined to persevere in proposing to Parliament and to the Country, by the same temperate and legal means which they have hitherto used, a Reform in the Representation of the People, the necessity of which, late events have only tended to confirm,

Resolved unanimously, That these Resolutions be printed, and published in the morning and evening newspapers.

In name and by order of the Meeting,

(Signed)

JOHN THROCKMORTON, Chairman,

Ordered, That the following Letter, and the Answer of the Committee of this Society, be printed and published:

" Committee of the Society for Constitutional Information at Sheffield, to the Committee of the Honourable Society, entitled the Friends of the People in London,

" GENTLEMEN,

" It is with infinite pleasure we have read and considered your Address and Declaration from your General Meeting on the 26th of April last. The principles therein set forth by so large a body of the most respectable and worthy characters, are a sufficient testimony and confirmation to us, that so Honourable a Society, by
signalizing

signalizing themselves in support of the laudable and general cause of the community, will render themselves most truly worthy of that high and benevolent appellation, by which they are already known to us, *The Friends of the People.*

“Your sentiments, your motives, and your plan of obtaining a Reform of the abuses of Government are perfectly in unison with our ideas.—It is our business (to which we have always confined our endeavours) to instruct the people in a temperate and peaceable manner in the necessity of such a Reform as you point out; but have never yet attempted to adopt or point out any particular mode of obtaining it, further than you will observe by the inclosed, believing that in due time men of more respectable characters and greater abilities would step forward. To such we have always had an eye, and upon such we have ever meant to rely for our Government, and the adoption of the most eligible plan of a more free and equal Representation in the House of Commons, and the removal of the great abuses and impositions by measures altogether inadequate to the interest and welfare of the nation in general, and to the mechanical and laborious part of the community in particular.

“It is therefore with the highest degree of satisfaction, that we behold such a respectable body stepping forward in so laudable, so just, and so good a cause. You have our warmest wishes, sincerest thanks, and assured endeavours
of

of support in it, to the best of our abilities, in a rational and peaceable way. It is our duty, and it will ever claim our attention strictly to adhere to, to maintain, and be governed by the principles laid down in your declaration. Notwithstanding the gross and fallacious insinuations of the enemies of justice and equity, we are assured that no honest man being acquainted with our principles, would have attempted to declare in the House, that the design of these Associations is completely to overturn the Constitution, &c. and we are sorry, that Mr. Baker was under the disagreeable necessity of explaining, in answer to such gross assertions, without having it in his power to speak with precision to the principles and design of this, and the similar Societies, and to have united them with yours in his explanation. For this, and similar reasons, we are induced to take the liberty of troubling you with the above, and following sketch. Our Members are now about 2400; yet we have the satisfaction with truth to affirm, that not the least disorder or confusion hath made its appearance amongst us—all is unanimity, peace, and concord. As our Members increase, the number of meeting places are increased in proportion, so as not to exceed at most thirty Members at one place. All the circular Meetings are held once a fortnight, on the same evening. Our General Meeting is held once a month at three different houses, on the same day, generally very crowded; yet, good order and regularity are strictly attended to;

to; and we doubt not but what has been suggested to be impossible, will be fully manifested to be not only practicable, but easy to accomplish, viz. to introduce useful knowledge, good order and regularity, into the minds and morals of the common or lower orders of people.

"We are perfectly satisfied of the integrity and abilities of those respectable characters who constitute the Society of the Friends of the People (but if we may presume to lay before them some thoughts we have had, respecting what method would be the best to adopt for obtaining the general sense of the nation before the proposed Motion in the next Session of Parliament takes place) we beg leave, with great deference to that honourable Society, to submit the following to their superior judgment. We believe the most likely and effectual plan will be to establish a Convention in London by Deputies from each County or District, by which means the sentiments of the nation may be obtained without any confusion or disorder.

"Looking up to the Friends of the People as our leaders and directors in this great and necessary business, we shall be happy, and esteem it a great favour, to receive any communication which they may vouchsafe to favour us with.

"I have the honour to be with esteem,

"Your's very respectfully,

"SAMUEL ASHTON, Secretary."

"By order of the Committee,

"Sheffield, May 14, 1792."

The

The Committee of the Society of the Friends of the People, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, to the Committee of the Society for Constitutional Information in Sheffield.

No. 52, Friar-Street, London, May 24, 1792.

SIR,

We beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, and to return you our thanks for a confidence which we trust our future conduct will merit from our Country.

We have received sincere pleasure, not only from the firm and virtuous tone in which you have spoken your principles, but from the wise and temperate manner in which you have limited their application to practice. We rejoice "that our sentiments, our motives, and our plans of reform, are perfectly in unison with your ideas," because we believe that a conduct in the great body of the People corresponding to such "sentiments," will equally confound the two opposite classes of enemies to the public weal; that it will defeat the hopes of those who would dupe the people into tumult, and that it will silence the slanders of those advocates of corruption who have laboured to render the cause of Liberty odious and terrible to all good-citizens; by confounding it with principles of anarchy, and by loading it with
the

the obloquy of provoking civil commotion, and of endangering the destruction of a Constitution, justly renowned for the freedom and happiness which it has so long bestowed.—You are pleased to say that “you look up to the Friends of the People as your Leaders and Directors in this great business.”—Authorised as we feel ourselves by this proffered guidance, and by that harmony of sentiment which, from the tenor of your letter, we must suppose to exist between you and ourselves, permit us to lay before you some ideas which are dictated by zeal for our common cause. The cause of Liberty can never be endangered by the assault of its enemies, but may sometimes be exposed by the indiscretion of its friends. Its principles are founded on impregnable reason, and its enemies are therefore too dextrous *directly* to attack them. It is not against the reasonings of the champions of corruptions (for they have produced none), but it is against their craft and their misrepresentation that we have found it necessary to defend ourselves by the wariness of our language and our conduct. A similar wariness, as far as the authority of our opinion can extend, we must counsel all Societies Associated on similar principles for the accomplishment of the same object, to observe. Accused as they are, in common with ourselves, of meditating one object and holding forth another; of seducing the People by a measure so specious
and

and salutary as Parliamentary Reform, into other measures of desperate tendency and undefinable extent, we can only advise them to follow our example in honestly and solemnly declaring, that "they make the preservation of the Constitution, on its true principles, the foundation of all their proceedings," and the measure of all their Reforms. Language thus explicit, will effectually combat misrepresentations, to which, perhaps, ardent indiscretion may have sometimes furnished pretexts. An early declaration of these opinions, which we sincerely believe you to entertain, will conciliate many to the cause of a Reform, who are now held in honest neutrality by their fears. The friends of order, after such a declaration, justified by consistent conduct, will be no longer driven to seek refuge from anarchy in the bosom of corruption. The interested supporters of the present abuses will thus be disarmed; for it is only by confounding Reform with commotion, and corruption with the British Constitution, that they are enabled to prolong and to defend their usurpations. All our language, as you will perceive from the proceedings, which we transmit to you, has been cautious, because all our views are moderate.—We are persuaded that you have a similar moderation of views, and we earnestly exhort you to a similar caution in language.

It

It is only indeed with Societies who express the same moderation of principles, and adopt the same wariness of language; that this Society can entertain any correspondence, or promise any co-operation. We have publicly disclaimed what we condemn, as well as avowed our real object; and on an occasion unsought for by us, in conformity with this principle, we have been compelled to decline all intercourse with the Society for Constitutional Information in London, for though we neither wish to attack, nor pretend to dictate, we are certainly entitled to decline all intercourse with men whose views and principles appear to us irreconcilable with ours.

On the particular measure which you suggest for collecting the opinion of the People on the subject of Reform, we do not feel ourselves yet prepared to decide. In a more advanced stage of the business, it may become very fit matter for deliberation.

Permit us, Sir, to conclude with congratulating you, and congratulating our Country, on the admirable principles which your letter contains, and on the intrepid moderation which it entitles us to expect from you.— You will deprive our enemies of every pretext for counterfeiting alarms which they do not feel, and of every opportunity to
defeat

defeat our measures by calumniating our intentions.

In name, and by order of the Committee,

(Signed)

C. GREY, Chairman.

To Samuel Ashton, Esq; Secretary
to the Society for Constitutional
Information in Sheffield;

Trinity Tavern, Saturday, June 3, 1792.

JOHN WHARTON, Esq; M. P. Chairman.

SAMUEL WHITBREAD, jun. Esq; M. P.
Deputy-Chairman.

MR. BYNG, from the Committee, read the following letter, addressed to the Chairman of this Society.

Monday night, June 2, 1792.

" Sir,

" After the strong declaration and protest, which some of us thought it our duty to make at the Meeting on the 19th of May, and in which we all heartily concurred, we might per-
R haps

haps have been justified in adopting that line of conduct which we now find ourselves bound to pursue, immediately on the appearance of the Paper from the Society for Constitutional Information, on the 25th of that month, if we had not been anxious, in that moment of critical expectation, to check every symptom of disunion among ourselves, in the sanguine hope that at the Meeting on Saturday last, the most decisive measures might have been taken to obviate the fatal effects of that Publication.

“ You, Sir, will recollect the weighty objections which were made to Mr. Cooper’s admission as a Member of the Association, the specific ground of those objections, and the declared Resolution of some of us to renounce our connection with the Association on that very account: and, as we cannot distinguish between the appointment of that Gentleman to correspond with the Jacobins at Paris, and the express avowal of a similar correspondence actually carried on under the hand and signature of Mr. Cartwright, we are at a loss to conceive, upon what principle, the one should have ceased to belong to the Association, which did not equally demand the exclusion of the other.

“ No step of this sort appears to have been taken.—Retaining the same opinion of the propriety of a Parliamentary Reform, agreeably to those principles which alone induced us to engage in the Association, and which we have repeatedly

peatedly declared to the Public, we feel what is due to our own consistency of conduct; and under this impression, we think it incumbent on us to withdraw our names from a Society, which, by continuing such connections, will, in our opinion, frustrate the attainment of those very objects for which alone the Association was instituted, and to which alone its attention ought to be directed.

"We have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient and humble servants,

(Signed) JOHN RUSSELL,

WM. BAKER,

J. C. CURWEN,

DUDLEY NORTH,

J. COURTENAY.

"To the Chairman of the Association

"for obtaining a Parliamentary

"Reform."

Resolved unanimously, That if it had occurred to any Member of this Association, that Major Cartwright ought to have been excluded on Saturday last, it would have been an act of public duty in such Member to have brought forward a motion for that purpose.

Resolved unanimously, That no one of the five Gentlemen, who have assigned the continuance of Major Cartwright in the Society as their sole reason for quitting it, did attend at the General Meeting on Saturday last.

Resolved unanimously, That it does not appear upon what reasonable ground the five Gentlemen, who have now quitted the Association, could have entertained a *sanguine hope*, that measures, which even they did not think fit to recommend, should have been proposed by others in their absence.

Resolved unanimously, That at the Meeting on the 19th of May, the name of Mr. Cooper was voluntarily withdrawn by the Gentleman who had originally proposed him, before any objection had been publicly made, or any thing whatever had been said in the Society upon the subject.

Resolved unanimously, That this Society have entered into no *connections* whatsoever inconsistent with their declared principles; but on the contrary, have publicly declined all intercourse with another Society, whose views and objects appeared to them irreconcilable with the real interests of the People, and the genuine principles of the Constitution.

Resolved unanimously, That if this Society had in any instance, contradicted or departed from the declared principles and objects of their Institution, or deviated from the mode which was originally adopted for obtaining them, individuals might then be justified in withdrawing from it.

Resolved unanimously, That no act, proceeding, or Resolution of the Association, has been, or can be pointed out, in which they have contradicted

tradicted or departed from the declared principles and objects of their Institution, or deviated from the mode which was originally adopted for obtaining them.

Resolved unanimously, That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of Lord John Russell, from the Books of the Society.

Resolved unanimously, That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of William Baker, Esq; from the Books of the Society.

Resolved unanimously, That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of John Christian Curwen, Esq; from the Books of the Society.

Resolved unanimously, That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of Dudley North, Esq; from the Books of the Society.

Resolved unanimously, That the Secretary be directed to expunge the name of J. Courtenay, Esq; from the Books of the Society.

The names of those five Gentlemen being expunged agreeably to the Resolutions of the Society,

Ordered, That the proceedings of the Society on this day be printed and published.

In name, and by order of the Society,

(Signed)

JOHN WHARTON, Chairman.

FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.

COMMITTEE ROOMS, No. 53, FRIETH-STREET, SOHO.

December 10, 1792.

"The Committee appointed by the Society of the *Friends of the People*, associated for the purpose of obtaining a PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, having already summoned a General Meeting of the Society, to be held at the Free-Mason's Tavern, on Saturday next, the 15th instant, will not anticipate the objects to be then submitted to their consideration; at the same time, viewing with anxiety the measures that have been lately taken, they think it incumbent on them to warn those with whom they are engaged in the great cause of PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, against the effects of an alarm which has been raised by circumstances so extraordinary and unexpected. They, therefore, earnestly express their wish that the Meeting may be attended by as many Members of this Association as possible confident that they will come to it with that disposition of temper and firmness becoming men interested in the preservation of the Peace and Liberty of their Country, which can alone be secured by a steady adherence to the acknowledged principles of the Constitution.

"By Order of the Committee,

"G. BYNG, Chairman."

FREEMASONS

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, Saturday, December 15, 1793.

At a General Meeting of the *Society of the Friends of the People*, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a *Parliamentary Reform*, held this day,

SAMUEL WHITBREAD, jun. Esq. M. P.
In the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That the following Address be adopted by this Society and published in the Town and Country Newspapers:

“THE Society of the Friends of the People, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, after a careful revision of all their Declarations, Resolutions, and Proceedings, since their institution, as well as of the events which have taken place since their last Meeting; and after an attentive consideration of the present state of public affairs—the apparent dispositions of the people at this time—the acknowledged conviction of almost all men, of all parties, of the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform, and with no other difference of opinion, but concerning the extent of the measure, or the time for proposing it; and finally, the situation in which this Society is placed by their own engagements, and by the expectations formed of their future conduct, have this day,

“Unanimously resolved, That they hold themselves bound by every tie of honour and of duty, to persevere in their endeavours to accomplish, through the known channels of the Constitution, the object of their Association; namely, an effectual Reformation in the construction of the House of Commons, until the object is obtained, or shall be found to be evidently unattainable by their efforts, or by any of those means in which they can participate.

“That considering the pains incessantly taken to traduce the character and principles of this Society, first by endeavouring to confound the idea of a Reform in Parliament, with that of disaffection to the established Constitution of this kingdom, as if a real Representation of the Commons were incompatible with the security of a limited monarchy, as if the Crown were not safe with an honest unbiassed House of Commons, or as if the idea of such Reform had been at all times reprobated, as it now is, by those who occupy the highest stations of profit and confidence under the Crown; and then by uniting us in the same description and obloquy with persons whom they call Republicans and Levellers, and with whom, if such doctrines and persons exist, we have no connexion; we think it incumbent on us to declare once more, that we disclaim the views and principles so basely and falsely attributed to us; and that

detesting

detesting, as we do, the corruptions and abuses notoriously prevailing and encreasing in every branch and department of government, our sole wish and object is to provide a constitutional instrument and power, by which they may be removed or corrected in a regular Parliamentary way.

“ That, calling, as we have done, for the support of the country in their own cause, and for the purposes which we have repeatedly declared, and soliciting the assistance of every man, who approves of our design, and may be desirous to promote it; we at the same time most earnestly exhort and conjure the true friends of the cause of Reform, to discourage, and resist, to the utmost of their ability, every attempt to support it by any other means than those which the laws permit, and the Constitution warrants. Mistaken zeal is always at the mercy, and too often under the guidance of real treachery. They who affect must to abhor sedition, are sometimes found at the bottom of it themselves; and instances are not wanting to prove, that, under the specious pretence of strengthening the hands of Government, a design may be formed of destroying the Liberty of the Press, of calling in the Military Power, and finally annihilating the Civil Government of the Country.

“ That whereas we have received assurances from numerous and respectable Associations in different

different parts of this united kingdom, of their entire concurrence in our declared views and principles, of their confidence in our integrity and prudence, and of their determination to support us, we earnestly hope that those Associations as well as all others who are friends of the same cause, will confine themselves to the same distinct object that we do, and co-operate with us on the principles stated in this and our former Declarations. In return we promise them that we will exert and devote our faculties, and our labours faithfully, honourably, and steadily, to the great cause of Reform, in which we are engaged and united with them.

In Name and by the Order of the Society,
(Signed)

SAMUEL WHITBREAD, jun. Chairman.

Resolved unanimously, That the following Letter addressed to the President of this Society, and the Answer of the Committee, be printed and published :

“ **UNITED IRISHMEN OF DUBLIN,**

“ **Hon. SIMON BUTLER, in the Chair.**

“ The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin, address the Friends of the People at London, impressed with the resemblance in the title,
nature,

nature, and destination of their respective institutions; and acting under that fraternity of feeling which such a coincidence naturally inspires. The title which you bear is a glorious one: and we too are Friends of the People. If we be asked, 'Who are the People?' We turn not our eyes here and there, to this party, or to that persuasion, and cry, 'Lo! the People;' but we look around us without partiality or predilection, and we answer, 'The multitude of human beings, the living mass of humanity associated to exist, to subsist, and to be happy. In them, and them only, we find the original of social authority, the measure of political value, and the pedestal of legitimate power.'

"As Friends of the People, upholding their rights and deploring their sufferings, the great object of this Society is a real representation of the Irish Nation in an Irish Parliament; and as friends of the *whole* people, we support the necessity of Catholics, emancipation, as a means of making representation what it ought to be, free, equal, and entire. If the people of one country be not obliged to obey the laws of another, on the same principle when the people resident in a country have no sort of influence over the Legislature, that Legislature will receive rather a discretionary acquiescence than legitimate obedience; and as this discretionary state is dangerous, because precarious, a change becomes

becomes necessary for the peace and happiness of the nation, violence being the last measure to which rational beings will resort.

"The present state of Ireland with regard to population, is upwards of four millions, three of which are of the Catholic religion; and with regard to political freedom,

"1. The state of *Protestant* representation is as follows: 17 boroughs have no resident elector; 16 have but one; 16 have from two to five; 90 have 13 electors each; 90 persons return for 106 venal boroughs, that is 212 members out of 300, the whole number. Fifty-four members are returned by five noblemen and four bishops; and borough influence has given landlords such power in the counties, as makes them boroughs also.—In short, representation which in its nature is only a deposit, has been converted into a property; and that Constitution which is founded on equal Liberty, and which declares that no tax shall be levied without the 'good will' of the people, is totally perverted in its principles, and corrupted in its practice; yet the Majesty of the People is still quoted with affected veneration; and if the crown be ostensibly placed in part of the Protestant portion, it is placed in mockery, for it is encircled with thorns.

"2. With regard to the *Catholics*, the following is the simple and sorrowful fact: Three millions, every one of whom has an interest in the state, and collectively give it its value, are taxed without being represented, and bound by

by laws to which they have not given consent. They now require a share of Political Liberty, in the participation of the elective franchise, and of Civil Liberty in the privilege of serving on Grand Juries. There can be no Civil without Political Liberty; and in requiring the right of suffrage, they, in reality, demand only a safeguard for their religion, their property, and their lives.

“ The code of Penal Laws against the Catholics, reduced oppression into a System; the action and pressure of this System continually accumulating without any re-action on the part of the sufferers sunk in the lethargy of servitude, has confirmed the governing portion of the People in a habit of domination. This *habit*, mixing with the antipathies of past times, and the irritations of the moment, has impressed a strange persuasion that the rights of the plurality are Protestant *property*, and that the birth-right of millions, born and to be born, continue the spoils of war and booty of conquest. The perversion of the understanding perverts the heart; and this Protestant ascendancy, as it calls itself, uniting power with passion, and hating the Catholics because it has injured them, on a bare inquisitorial suspicion insufficient to criminate an individual, would erase a whole People from the Roll of Citizenship, and for the sins (if they were sins) of remote ancestors, would attain their remotest posterity. We
have

have read, and read with horror, that Louis XI. ordered the children to be placed under the scaffold where the father was beheaded, that they might be sprinkled with his blood.

“ It is, we think, by this unequal distribution of popular privilege, that its very nature has in this kingdom, been corrupted; and from the moment that Equality of Rights was overturned, and General Liberty became particular power, the public mind has been split into a conflict of factions. General distribution of the Elective Franchise would make corruption impracticable; but when common right becomes the property of person, party, or persuasion, it acquires a value equally unnatural and unconstitutional; is bought and sold; rises or falls, like any marketable commodity. The deprivation of the Elective Franchise on the one hand, robs a great majority of the nation of an invaluable blessing; and its *accumulation* in the hands of the Protestant portion, operates on that very portion as a curse. The right of *all* heaped up and hoarded by the *few*, becomes a public pest, and the nutriment of the Constitution is changed into its poison.—The iniquitous monopoly rots in Boroughs, spreads its contagion through Counties, taints morals and manners, makes Elections mere fairs for the traffic of Franchise and the sale of men; in place of that nationality of mind, which spreads its parental embrace around a whole People, substitutes

stitutes the envious excluding spirit of selfish corporations, and swelling at length into monstrous and gigantic ascendancy, holds forth an hundred thousand hands to bribe and betray, and tramples with an hundred thousand feet on those miserable millions, who have lost their only guarantee against injustice and oppression.

“Instructed by the genius of the Constitution, and the genuine spirit of the laws; instructed of late by all that has been spoken or written, or acted, or suffered in the cause of Freedom; instructed by the late Revolution in America; by the late Revolution in Ireland; by the late Revolution in France; hearing of all that has been done over the face of the globe for Liberty, and feeling all that can be suffered from the want of it; reading the Charter of Independence to Ireland, and listening to the spirit-stirring voice of her great deliverer; actuated, in fine by that imperishable spark in the bosom of man, which the servitude of a century may smother, but cannot extinguish, the Catholics of this Country have been lessoned into Liberty; have learned to know their rights; to be sensible of their wrongs, and to detail by peaceable delegation, their grievances, rather than endure without obedience. You! in either kingdom, who reproach the Catholics of Ireland for asserting the rights of nature, burn your Books, tear your Charters, break down your Free Press, and crumble to pieces those
moulds

moulds which have cast Liberty in so fair a form, as to make Catholics feel what Protestants have felt, and join their admiration and love with those of a worshipping world.

“ This Society and many other Societies have associated to create that union of power, and that brotherhood of affection, among all the inhabitants of this island, which is the interest as well as the duty of all. We are all Irishmen, and our object is to unite the different descriptions of Religion in the cause of our common Country. From the most opposite points in the wide circumference of religion we tend, with increasing velocity, to the same centre of political union. A Reform in Parliament, preceding Catholic enfranchisement, would be in its nature partial and exclusive; and unless a Reform immediately follows that emancipation (which it will certainly do) the extension of Elective Franchise, would only add to the mass of corruption. The centre of our union is fixed and immovable. The Presbyterian wishes for National Freedom. The Catholic aspires to nothing more; nor can either of them be brought to believe that those varieties of religious faith, which may be deemed the pleasure of the Creator, should be made the engines of political torture to any of his creatures. Too long have our People been set in array of battle against each other; too long have the rancor and revenge of our ancestors been
been

been left as a legacy of blood to their posterity ; too long has one limb of the Social Body been tied down, until it had nearly lost all feeling, life, and energy. It is our wish, it is our hope, to give Ireland the full and free possession of both her arms, her Catholic arm, as well as her Protestant arm, that she may the better embrace her friends, or grapple with her foes.

Such are the principles and practice of our institution, which, having neither power nor patronage, but merely the energy of honesty, has not only been distinguished by the calumnies of those, who are born only to bite the heel, and be crushed under foot, but has been honoured by the obloquy of men, who fill the first offices in the State. From them we appeal to natural right, and eternal justice, which ought ever to be established without compromise or reservation. From them we appeal to those, who call themselves Friends of the People.— Look not upon Ireland with an eye of indifference. The period of Irish insignificance is passing fast away. If the Nation ever appeared contemptible, it was because the Nation did not act: but no sooner in the late war was it abandoned by Government, than it rose to distinction as a People. As to any union between the islands, believe us when we assert, that our union rests upon our mutual independence.— We shall love each other, *if we be left to ourselves*. It is the union of minds which ought to bind

S

these

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these Nations together. Reciprocal interests and mutual wants will ever secure mutual affection ; but, were any other union to be forced, and force only could effect it, you would endanger your liberties, and we should lose our rights ; you would feel the influence of the Crown increased beyond all sufferance, and we should lose the name and energies of a People, with every hope of raising to its merited station in the map of mankind, this noble and neglected island, " for which God has done so much, and man so little."

"Signed by Order,
"THOMAS WRIGHT, Secretary."

DUBLIN, October 26, 1794.

A N S W E R

Of the Committee of the Society of the FRIENDS
of the PEOPLE, associated for the purpose of
obtaining a Parliamentary Reform.

COMMITTEE-ROOMS, No. 52, Frieth-street, Sols.

SIR,

"We have received by the hands of Mr. Archdekin, the favour of your Address, and shall take the earliest opportunity of laying it before the Society of the Friends of the People, at their first Meeting, which is appointed to be held on the 15th of next month. We cannot, however, delay expressing the pleasure we feel
in

in finding so large a portion of our fellow-citizens entertaining sentiments so just, and expressing these sentiments with an energy that commands assent. Our endeavours must necessarily be confined to this island, and can have no immediate relation to Ireland, which ever must possess a right to legislate for herself.— Whether we shall give or take the example, our wishes will ever be earnest for your success.

In name, and by order of the Committee,

(Signed) GEORGE ROUS, Chairman.

November 27, 1792.

*To the President of the Society of United
Irishmen in Dublin.*

At a Meeting of the Committee on the 24th of May, it was ordered that the following Resolutions be printed and circulated by this Society.

THATCHED-HOUSE TAVERN, 16th May 1782.

“ A T a numerous and respectable Meeting of
“ Members of Parliament friendly to a
“ Constitutional Reformation, and of Members
“ of several Committees of Counties and Cities.

S 2

PRESENT,

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P R E S E N T,

The Duke of Richmond,
Lord Surrey,
Lord Mahon,
The Lord Mayor,
Sir Watkin Lewis,
Mr. Dunscombe,
Sir C. Wray,
Mr. B. Hollis,
Mr. Withers,

The Hon. William Pitt,
The Rev. Mr. Wyrill,
Major Cartwright,
Mr John Horne Tooke,
Alderman Wilkes,
Doctor Jebb,
Mr. Churchill,
Mr. Frost,
&c. &c. &c.

“Resolved unanimously, “That the motion
“of the Hon. William Pitt, on the 7th instant,
“for the appointment of a Committee of the
“House of Commons to enquire into the state
“of the Representation of the People of Great-
“Britain, and to report the same to the House,
“and also what steps it might be necessary to
“take, having been defeated by a motion for
“the order of the day, it is become indispensa-
“bly necessary, that application should be made
“to Parliament by petitions from the collective
“Body of the People, in their respective districts,
“requesting a substantial Reformation of the
“Commons House of Parliament.

“Resolved unanimously, “That this Meet-
“ing, considering that a general application by
“the collective body of the people to the House
“of Commons cannot be made before the close
“of the present Session, is of opinion that *the sense*
“*of the People should be taken at such times as may be*
“*convenient during this summer, in order to lay their*
“*several Petitions before Parliament early in the next*
“*Session, when their proposals for a Parliamentary*
“Reformation

"Reformation (without which neither the liberty of
 "the Nation can be preserved, nor the permanence of
 "a wise and virtuous administration can be secured)
 "may receive that ample and mature discussion, which
 "so momentous a question demands."

*The State of the Representation of England and
 Wales, delivered to the Society, the Friends of
 the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining
 a Parliamentary Reform, on Saturday the 9th
 of February, 1793.*

*Report of the Committee appointed to Report upon
 the State of the Representation in England
 and Wales.*

YOUR Committee apprehend that they
 cannot better comply with the intentions
 of your Society, than by arranging the subject
 referred to them under distinct Heads, and giv-
 ing a plain statement of facts unmixed with any
 argumentative inference, and accompanied by
 no other observations than such as a due atten-
 tion to perspicuity may appear to render neces-
 sary.

To this line of proceeding your Committee feel more particularly attached, because it carries with it that internal evidence of openness and fair dealing which must conciliate the unprejudiced, even if it were possible it should fail to convince them, and confines the opponents of Reform to that issue which sets at defiance all speculation and sophistry, and on which every man is capable of forming a judgment. An unembellished detail of facts must, to be refuted, be invalidated; and for the same reason that it is impregnable if well founded, it is easily shaken if built on falsehood or error. By the very plan of their Report, therefore, your Committee give an unequivocal testimony that they rest their claim to credit solely upon the accuracy of their statements; and they offer a substantial proof that they fear no investigation into what they advance, by the manner in which they advance it.

YOUR Committee have considered the state of the representation under three general Heads;

FIRST. They have examined into THE REPRESENTATION AS IT EXISTS IN POINT OF FORM;

And herein,

1st. *Of the division of the representation, or the proportions in which the different counties of England contribute to the total number of Representatives.*

2dly.

2dly. *Of the distribution of the elective franchise, or the proportional number of voters by which the different Representatives are elected.*

3dly. *Of the right of voting, or the various restrictions and limitations under which the privilege of a vote for the choice of a Representative is bestowed.*

4thly. *Of the qualifications to be possessed by Candidates, and those elected—and*

5thly. *Of the duration of Parliaments.*

SECONDLY. They have examined into THE
MODE IN WHICH ELECTIONS ARE
CONDUCTED AND DECIDED;

And herein,

1st. *Of the length of time to which polls are protracted, and the causes thereof.*

2dly. *Of the expence and inconvenience arising from the distance between the residence of the Elector, and the place of Election.*

3dly. *Of the influence of corporations by the powers intrusted to the returning officers.*

4thly. *Of the appeal to the House of Commons under the operations of the Acts, 10th, 11th, 25th, and 28th of Geo. III. as far as the same relate to expence and delay.*

THIRDLY. They have shewn THE MISCHIEF
RESULTING FROM THE DEFECTS AND
ABUSES POINTED OUT IN THEIR RE-
PORT;

And herein,

Of the system of PRIVATE PATRONAGE, and the influence possessed by Peers and wealthy Commoners, in the nomination of what are called the Representatives of the People.

By this division of the subject your Committee exhibit a view of Representation, considered with respect to its component parts, the mode in which those parts are combined, and the consequences and effects of the whole system.

Of the Representation, as it exists in point of Form.

YOUR Committee find that the number of Representatives is 513 (exclusive of Scotland) and that they are returned to serve in Parliament by the different counties in the following proportions to the gross number :

40 Counties return 2 each,	—	—	—	80
23 Counties (Wales) 1 each,	—	—	—	23
				<hr/> 103

These Counties, which are classed according to the usual division of England, return Members for the different Cities, Towns, and Boroughs they contain, in the following proportions, viz.

Northern Counties,

Northumberland, including Berwick,	—	—	—	6
Cumberland,	—	—	—	4
Westmoreland,	—	—	—	2
Durham,	—	—	—	2
Yorkshire,	—	—	—	28
Lancashire,	—	—	—	12
Northern Counties return, exclusive of County Members,				<hr/> 54

Carry over

146

Middle

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Middle Counties Westward.

					Brought forward	146
Cheshire,	—	—	—	—	—	5
Derbyshire,	—	—	—	—	—	3
Staffordshire,	—	—	—	—	—	3
Warwickshire,	—	—	—	—	—	4
Worcestershire,	—	—	—	—	—	7
Shropshire,	—	—	—	—	—	10
Herefordshire,	—	—	—	—	—	6
Monmouthshire,	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gloucestershire,	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>Middle Counties Westward return, exclusive of County</i>						
Members,	—	—	—	—	—	46

Middle Counties Eastward,

Oxfordshire,	—	—	—	—	—	5
Buckinghamshire,	—	—	—	—	—	13
Bedfordshire,	—	—	—	—	—	3
Northamptonshire,	—	—	—	—	—	7
Nottinghamshire,	—	—	—	—	—	6
Rutland,	—	—	—	—	—	0
Leicestershire	—	—	—	—	—	2
Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	—	10
Huntingdonshire	—	—	—	—	—	2
<i>Middle Counties Eastward return, exclusive of County</i>						
Members,	—	—	—	—	—	46

Eastern Counties.

Norfolk	—	—	—	—	—	10
Suffolk	—	—	—	—	—	24
Cambridgeshire	—	—	—	—	—	3
Hertfordshire	—	—	—	—	—	4
Middlesex	—	—	—	—	—	6
Essex	—	—	—	—	—	6
<i>Eastern Counties return, exclusive of County Members</i>						43

Western Counties,

Dorsetshire	—	—	—	—	—	13
Somersetshire	—	—	—	—	—	16
Devonshire	—	—	—	—	—	24
Cornwall	—	—	—	—	—	43
<i>Western Counties return, exclusive of County Members</i>						100
Carry over						380

Southern Counties.

	Brought forward	380
Kent	—	8
Suffex	—	18
Surrey	—	12
Hampshire	—	24
Berkshire	—	7
Wiltshire	—	33
Cinque Ports	—	16
<i>Southern Counties and Cinque Ports return, exclusive of</i>		
County Members	—	117
<i>12 Counties of Wales return 1 each, exclusive of</i>		
County Members	—	12
<i>2 Universities, 2 each</i>	—	4
Total		513

Your Committee, having thus shewn the proportions in which the different counties and divisions of England are represented, will next endeavour to point out *in what proportions the Elective Franchise is distributed among the body of Electors.*

Your Committee have found it impracticable to obtain any accurate account of the total number of Electors in England, but they conceive that the necessity for such an account is essentially obviated by the one which they are enabled to lay before you. The following statement, on the general correctness of which they can rely, is conclusive to prove, that, by the partial and unequal manner in which the mass of Electors is divided, such a proportion of the 513 Representatives is returned to Parliament by a few, as renders it of little consequence by how

how many the remainder is elected. If 3 persons be chosen by 30, and 2 by 4970, though undoubtedly the 5 are chosen by 5000 still it will hardly be contended that such a distribution of the Electors does not effectually take away every advantage of popular representation.

Your Committee find that *two hundred and fifty seven Members*, being a *majority* of the Commons of England, are elected by 11,075 voters; or in other words by little more than the 170th part of the People to be represented, even supposing them to be only *two millions*.

The operation of this defect in the Representation cannot however be thoroughly understood, without observing the manner in which the body who return this majority is *sub-divided*; for this purpose your Committee have drawn out the following statement, in order to bring before you in detail, the number of Electors by which each of the different Representatives, who constitute a majority of the House of Commons, is chosen; and, with a view to shew all that the Representation even pretends to be, your Committee have considered *Burgage* tenures, and other Rights of a similar description, as creating *real* voters; the actual number of which they have taken into their calculation, reckoning them as Electors having individually a free choice.

A STATEMENT

A Statement of the Proportions, in which the Elective Franchise is distributed among that Body of Electors who return the Majority of the 513 Members for England and Wales.

Places where the right of voting is in Burgage and other Tenures of a similar description.		Number of voters Members.	
Number of voters Members.			
Appleby	229	9	
Ashburton	200	2	
Great Bedwin	80	2	
Beeralston	190	2	
Blechingly	90	2	
Boroughbridge	74	2	
Bramber	36	2	
Clitheroe	102	2	
Cockermouth	260	2	
Downton	20	2	
E. Grinstead	36	2	
Heytesbury	50	2	
Horsham	60	2	
Knarsbro'	110	2	
Malton	200	2	
Midhurst	100	2	
Northallerton	200	2	
Petersfield	154	2	
Richmond	270	2	
Ripon	186	2	
Ryegate	200	2	
Saltaish	38	2	
Old Sarum	7	2	
Thirsk	50	2	
Woolly	45	2	
Westbury	50	2	
Electors	2938	return	52
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Places where the number of voters does not exceed 50.			
Aldborough (Su.)	35	2	
Andover	15	2	
Banbury	19	2	
Bath	32	2	
Beaumaris	24	2	
Bewdley	14	1	
Bishop's Castle	50	2	
Bodmyn	36	2	
Bosfiney	20	2	
Brackley	33	2	
Buckingham	13	2	
Calne	34	2	
Camelford	19	2	
Castle Rising	50	2	
Christchurch	40	2	
Corff Castle	26	2	
Devizes	36	2	
Droitwich	14	2	
Dunwich	40	2	
East Looe	20	2	
Edmondspury	36	2	
Gatton	10	2	
St. Germaine	26	2	
Gramponad	50	2	
Harwich	31	2	
Helston	36	2	
Hastings	12	2	
Launceston	20	2	
Liskeard	50	2	
Leftwithiel	24	2	
Lyme Regis	31	2	
Lymington	18	2	
Malmesbury	13	2	
Marlborough	7	2	
St. Mawes	36	2	
St. Michael	42	2	
Newport (H.)	24	2	
Newtown (L.)	50	2	
Newtown (H.)	36	2	
Orford	20	2	
Romney	13	2	
Rye	15	2	
Scarborough	44	2	
Tavistock	50	2	
Thetford	31	2	
			Number

Number of voters		Members	Number of voters		Members
Tiverton	26	2	Cambridge	200	2
Truro	26	2	Dorchester	200	2
Wilton	50	2	Eye	200	2
Winchelsea	9	2	Guildford	120	2
Wycombe	43	2	Heydon	190	2
Yarmouth (H.)	12	2	Hindon	200	2

Electors 1449 ret. 100

Places where the number of voters does not exceed 100.

Agmondesham	70	2
Aldborough (Y)	57	2
Callington	62	2
Dartmouth	98	2
West Looe	70	2
Fowey	61	2
Great Grimby	75	2
Haslemere	60	2
Higham Ferrers	84	2
Hythe	96	2
Montgomery	80	1
Newport (C.)	62	2
Oakhampton	98	2
Peole	100	2
Portsmouth	60	2
Salisbury	54	2
Saaford	82	2
Steyning	109	2
Stockbridge	102	2
Totneft	89	2
Tregony	60	2
Wenlock	100	2
Whitchurch	70	2

Electors 1,781 ret. 45

Places where the number of voters does not exceed 200.

Arundel	190	2
Boston	200	2
Bridport	180	2
Chippenham	140	2

Cambridge	200	2
Dorchester	200	2
Eye	200	2
Guildford	120	2
Heydon	190	2
Hindon	200	2
Huntingdon	200	2
Ilchester	150	2
St. Ives	180	2
Ludgerhall	110	2
Minehead	160	2
Milbourne Port	114	2
Morpeth	200	2
Penryn	140	2
Plymouth	160	2
Plympton	104	2
Queensborough	131	2
Retford	112	2
Wallingford	140	2
Wareham	150	2
Wendover	120	2
Woodstock	200	2
Wootton Bassett	160	2
Winchester	110	2

Electors 4461 ret. 56

Places where the number of voters does not exceed 300.

Marlow	216	2
Bridgewater	230	2
	446	4

ABSTRACT.

2,938	elect	52
1,449	—	100
1,781	—	45
4,461	—	56
446	—	4
11,075	return	157

Your

Note. The general accuracy of this statement your Committee are satisfied may be relied upon. They do not pretend to state that the number of voters in every separate borough is exactly ascertained, but they are persuaded that they are rightly classed; that

Your Committee will now call your attention to *the various rights of voting* which are exercised in the different places returning Members to Parliament:

They find that the members for the 52 counties are all elected by one uniform right. Every man throughout England, possessed of 40 shillings per annum freehold, except in certain cities and towns having peculiar jurisdictions, is entitled to a vote for the county in which such freehold is situated.

With respect to the different cities, towns, and boroughs, they exercise a variety of separate and distinct rights, scarcely capable of being classed in any methodical order, and still less of being ascertained by the application of any fixed principle. In the greater part of them indeed the right of voting appears to be vested in the *freemen of bodies corporate*, but, under this general description, an infinite diversity of peculiar customs is to be found. In some places the number of voters is limited to a select body not exceeding 30 or 40; in others it is extended to 8, or 10,000. In some places the freeman must be a resident inhabitant to entitle him to vote;

that is, that those places set down in the second class have not more than 50; in the third class not more than 100; and so of the rest. The difficulty of giving the exact number will at once appear, when it is recollected that in most of the Boroughs here mentioned, there have been no contests for many years. Your Committee have, however, procured the best intelligence in their power.

vote ; in others his presence is only required at an election. The right to the freedom is also different in different boroughs, and may, according to the peculiar usage, be obtained by birth, servitude, marriage, redemption, &c. &c.

The remaining rights of voting are of a still more complicated description. Burgageholds, leaseholds, and freeholds,—scot and lot, inhabitants householders, inhabitants at large, pot-wallopers, and commonalty, each in different Boroughs prevail, and create endless misunderstandings and litigation, from the difficulty which is daily found to arise in defining and settling the legal import of those numerous distinctions, which, in some places, commit the choice of two members to as many inhabitants as every house can contain ; in others, to the possessor of a spot of ground where neither houses nor inhabitants have been seen for years, and which, in a few instances, have even prevented the wisdom of Parliament, from finally determining who are entitled to vote, or what the right is *.

Your

* Pomfret, Poole, Westminster, Ludgershall, Newark, and Carlisle, have appeals upon the right of voting before the House of Commons remaining yet undecided.

A great variety of cases might be quoted to shew the inconvenience arising from the present complicated rights of voting ; that of *Salisbury* in particular is too curious to be unnoticed. Since the year 1772, it has occupied the attention of no less than *five Committees*, and is still open to dispute. In 1785, the right was determined to be in the *corporation*, and the candidates returned by them were declared to be duly elected. One of these gentlemen having vacated his seat, a new election brought the question again before the House, when the right was determined to be in the

Your Committee have not entered into any detail of the different rights of voting, because it would have extended their report to a very tedious, and, in their opinion, a very unnecessary length; they cannot, however, pass over this part of their enquiry without calling your attention to the following facts, conceiving that the manner in which the voice of the people is at present collected, cannot be placed in a stronger point of view by stating those who *are*, than by describing some of those who *are not* entitled to vote.

A man possessed of 1000l. per annum, or any greater sum, arising from copyhold, leasehold for 99 years, trade, property in the national funds, or even freehold in the city of London, and many other cities and towns having peculiar jurisdictions *, is not thereby entitled to vote.

Religious opinions create an incapacity to exercise the Elective Franchise. All Catholics are excluded generally, and by the operation of the Test Laws, Protestant Dissenters are deprived of a voice in the Election of Representatives

burgage holders, and the seat given accordingly. By these contradictory decisions two gentlemen voted in Parliament for three years, each of them denying the pretensions of the other, and the House of Commons having at different times decided against the right of both.

For a competent knowledge of the various rights of voting, see the *Reports* of Messrs. *Douglas, Luders, Phillips, and Frazer*, where, in nine volumes, much light is thrown upon the subject.

* *At Kingston upon Hull*, for instance, the number of freeholders, thus excluded, is stated to amount to 500.

tatives in about thirty boroughs, where the right of voting is confined to the corporate officers alone.

A man paying taxes to any amount, how great soever, for his domestic establishment, does not obtain a right to vote unless his residence be in some borough where that right is vested in the inhabitants. To ascertain how far this exception applies, your Committee have carefully examined into the number of boroughs in which the elective franchise is committed to the inhabitants, and they find them to be 60, of which 28 contain less than 300 voters. Your Committee must here add, that it appears by a return made to Parliament, from the Tax-office, in 1785, that the number of houses paying taxes was 714,911.

Such appears to be the nature of the principal qualifications, and restrictions under which the right of voting is bestowed or withheld; it next remains to be shewn *who may legally be chosen as the Representative.*

Your Committee find a variety of disabilities created by different statutes, or the custom of Parliament. By these, minors, papists, aliens, clergymen in priests' orders, sheriffs, and other returning officers in their respective jurisdictions, persons concerned in the management of certain duties, or possessing certain offices, contractors, and persons holding pensions during pleasure, are incapacitated to sit in the House of Commons. Besides these disqualifications, there

is also another most material one, by which the Electors are precluded from making choice of any man not possessed of property *in land*. By the 9th Anne, c. 5. every Candidate, if required, must take an oath that he has a clear estate of freehold or copyhold,* to the value of 600l. per annum in the case of the Knight of a Shire, and 300l. in the case of a citizen or burgess; and the oath must be renewed when the member takes his seat. The only exception is in favour of the Representatives of the two Universities, and the eldest sons or heirs apparent of Peers, and persons possessing 600l. per annum, from whom no qualification is required.

With respect to *the duration of Parliaments*, your Committee find, that by an act passed in the year 1694, (or soon after the Revolution,) it was declared, that, "*By the ancient laws and statutes of this kingdom, frequent Parliaments ought to be held, and that frequent and new Parliaments tend very much to the happy union and good agreement of the King and People,*" and therefore it was enacted, "*that no Parliament should last longer than for three years.*"

In the first year of the reign of Geo. I. (or 1715) the Parliament, which was thus elected for *three* years, determined that it would be more convenient to hold their seats for *seven*, and by a law at that time passed, and still unre-

* A Copyhold qualifies to *represent*, but not to *elect*.

pealed, such at present is the legal term, before the expiration of which the people cannot revoke their trust, be the conduct of their Representatives what it may. The royal prerogative gives however to the King a better security for the good behaviour of the Commons toward the Crown, by enabling him to dissolve the Parliament at any hour which to his Ministers shall seem proper.

OF THE MODE OF CONDUCTING ELECTIONS.

Your Committee having reported upon the various heads which the first division of their enquiry presented to them, and having, in so doing, laid before you what may be called the constituent parts of an election, (namely, the places entitled to send the Representatives, who are qualified to choose, and who to be chosen) come next to examine in what manner those different rights are brought into action, and to state to you, *the mode in which Elections are conducted.*

Your Committee find that Election proceedings are carried on with extreme inconvenience to the Electors, and excessive expence to the Candidates. The two evils are however so intimately blended, and depend so much upon each other, that, from an idea that a separate and distinct discussion of them would only lead to tiresome repetition, and unnecessary detail,

it has been thought most advisable, to consider them both under one head.

The first defect in the system established for collecting the opinions of the people, to which your Committee will request your attention, is, that the *Poll*, whether the voters consist of 10, or 10,000, and whether the right of voting be in inhabitants resident, or in freemen, or freeholders dispersed throughout the county, is *only taken in one fixed place*.* A freeholder of *Cornwall*, living in *Northumberland*, must forego the exercise of his franchise, or travel to *Lestwithiel*; and a freeman of *Berwick*, residing at *Falmouth*, can only be heard as an Elector after a journey of 400 miles.

As these may be called extreme cases, and your Committee are above all things anxious to confine themselves within the limits of strict fact and practice, they conceive it necessary to enter into some detail on this subject.

In County Elections it frequently happens that the freeholder, living in the county itself, must go 40, 50, or 60 miles before he can be admitted to poll; but these are trifling journies compared to what must be taken by those who, being freemen of one city or town, reside in another. Your Committee have thought they could not furnish better information respecting

* Except in *Hampshire*, where, for "the ease of the inhabitants," the Sheriff has a power of removing the Poll to the Isle of Wight. 7 & 8 W. 3. c. 25. s. 10.

this inconvenience, than by consulting and making extracts from a certain number of those poll books, which are printed at different Boroughs by authority of the returning officer, and which distinguish the number of *resident* from *non-resident* freemen. From these it appears that, at the following places, the proportion at the last contests stood thus:

	Residents	From London	From the Country	Tot.
Canterbury	833	153	334	1339
Coventry	1891	356	278	2525
Bedford	919	127	332	1438
Lincoln	428	116	406	960
Newcastle (Nor.)	1148	208	889	3123
Bristol	3957	663	1449	6049
Colchester	528	227	525	1280
Lancaster	657	144	1481	2182

From the above, which are selected from a great variety of similar instances, to give a general idea of the subject, it appears, that in many places the non-resident are nearly equal to the resident voters, and in some places actually outnumber them.

Your Committee have not thought it necessary to state more than two classes of non-residents, viz. those *from London*, and those *from the country* generally. The variety of distances from which the latter are brought, would, if here set down, extend this report to too great length, but the curious may easily satisfy themselves by a reference to the printed poll-books. Your Committee conceive they give an average

sufficiently correct, when they take the distance which the country voters have, one with another, to travel, to be, for each place, *a fourth part* of the distance which such place is from London. Thus the non-resident country voters for Bristol, it is to be assumed reside 30 miles from the place of poll, those living in London not being nearer than 120 miles.

On enquiry among those agents who have been in the habit of managing the conveyance of voters from one place to another, such accounts have been received of the extravagant expence attending this part of an Election as would, if here set down, subject your Committee to the imputation of having exaggerated in their statement. For instance, every voter at *Newcastle upon Tyne*, coming from London, is said to cost 30l.; at *Exeter* 20l.; at *Bristol* 15l. at *Colchester* 10l. The reasons assigned for such exorbitant charges are, that the greater part of the freemen are tradesmen, or mechanics, who cannot be supposed to travel great distances, merely for the sake of giving a vote; that they are to be enticed from home, if not by direct bribery, at least by the inducement of pleasant conveyance, good accommodations, and reasonable satisfaction, if not something more, for their trouble and loss of time; and that, when a Candidate undertakes to pay the travelling expences of a man who is to confer a favour upon him at the end of the journey, it cannot

be expected that he will venture to scrutinize too closely into the expedition with which he proceeds, or the length of the bills he incurs on the road.

What effect this reasoning may have on the minds of those who are not conversant in Elections, your Committee know not; but the accuracy of the following *estimate*, which, for the better understanding the extent of the expence in question, they have thought it proper to lay before you, will not, they persuade themselves, be controverted, except for the purpose of adding to the amount,

*Estimate of the least expence of conveying a voter
from the place of his residence to the
place of the poll.*

Sixpence per mile—cost of conveyance.

Seven shillings and sixpence per day—cost of maintenance.

Ten shillings and sixpence per day—for loss of time and trouble.

This * last charge is calculated from the sum which, on an average, is paid on the same account to witnesses from the Country attending Election Committees in the House of Commons.

* It is true, that in the strictness of the law, the voter is not entitled to be paid for his loss of time and trouble, but the practice of doing it has become so general, and the propriety of it so universally assented to, that it is now notoriously insisted upon by all voters, and necessarily complied with by all candidates.

According to this estimate it appears, that
A voter taken 50 miles to poll, will cost,

For conveyance out and home	£. 2	10	0
For three days maintenance	1	2	6
For three days loss of time and trouble	1	11	6
	£. 5	4	0

A voter taken 250 miles to poll, will cost,

For conveyance out and home	12	10	0
For seven days maintenance	2	12	6
For seven days loss of time and trouble	3	12	6
	£. 18	16	0

In the above, your Committee have supposed that the voter spends only *one clear day* at the place of Election; but they must observe, that, from every information they have been able to collect, his stay there is generally much longer.

With respect to the expedition with which the voter travels, it is impossible to lay down any fixed rule as to the number of miles to be travelled in one day; but your Committee apprehend, they may be fairly stated to be from 50 to 90, according to the distance of the entire journey. A voter, for instance, would be a day in going from London to Canterbury (56 miles) and probably not more in going to Coventry (91 miles); and in such journies as from London to Newcastle (273 miles) he might continue to travel at the rate of 80 or 90.

If any credit be given to the accuracy of these estimates, it will be easy, with the assistance of the preceding extracts from the printed poll-books, to form an idea what the expence of bringing non-resident voters to poll must be in places where the Electors are numerous.—Thus,

At Colchester.—The voters resident in London, being 227, to be brought 50 miles to poll, must, if absent 3 days, cost at least 5*l.* 4*s.* each, or all together, *£*1180

At Coventry.—The voters resident in London, being 356, to be brought 90 miles, supposing them only to be out 3 days, cost 7*l.* 4*s.* each, or all together, *£*2563

At Newcastle upon Tyne.—The voters resident in London, being 208, to be brought 274 miles, must, supposing them to be absent from home 7 days, cost at least 20*l.* each, or all together, *£*4160

At Bristol.—The voters resident in London being 663, to be brought 130 miles, even supposing them only to be out 4 days, must cost at least 9*l.* 12*s.* each, or all together, *£*6364

The non-resident voters coming from the different parts of the country, your Committee have before proposed to consider as travelling one quarter of the distance which the place of Election is from London; but as it would be difficult to lay down any fixed rule by which to estimate the length of time the country voters are absent from home, they will leave every person to form his own calculation on this branch of expence. The truth is, that where the distance is under 25 miles, some voters will go and return in one day, whereas others, where the distance is above 10 miles, will

will make their polling a business of two days. Much depends on the voter's character and occupation. If, however, the country voters belonging to Bristol were to be estimated as costing only 2l. 8s. each (that is reckoning them to be absent only one day,) they would all together be a charge upon the Candidates of 3,429l. which, added to the expence of London voters, would make *the total amount to be defrayed, for non-resident electors 9,793l.*

This evil of the voters residing at a place distant from the poll has also another effect, namely, the rendering nugatory an act passed *to prevent giving meat and liquor at Elections.* Custom has sanctioned the propriety of opening public houses for the reception of voters from the country, and it may easily be conceived how impossible it must be, during the tumult of an Election, to distinguish one description of Electors from another; the consequence is, that the resident freemen are equally with the non-residents admitted to participate in the distribution of liquor, and that the whole town is a scene of drunkenness and confusion, to the great inconvenience of the inhabitants, and the intolerable expence of the Candidates.

Your Committee know not in what way they can bring before you any exact detail of the various other expences to which Candidates are liable. A heavy charge is incurred from the fees payable on the admission of freemen having
an

an inchoate right; that is, a right acquired, but not claimed, and which, as it is to be exercised for the benefit of the Candidate, is so generally taken up at his expence, that from custom it is never considered as an act of bribery. These fees vary much, and amount from five shillings to five guineas for each admission. The numerous points of law which arise in the course of every contest make it necessary for the parties to have the assistance of counsel, and solicitors; the manœuvres which attend all polls, conducted upon a system of such intricacy as they are at this day, require the exertions of many vigilant agents; the very cockades form an indispensable and heavy cost in an Election; nor can any Candidate, speaking generally, flatter himself with much hope of success, unless his liberality and contempt of economy keep equal pace with the extravagance of his competitor. All these however are evils which those, who have never been concerned in Elections, cannot perhaps be made to feel, and which to those, who are conversant in them, will appear much under-rated. Your Committee proceed in their report of those inconveniences which admit of direct proof, and the next to which they must turn is—

The extreme length to which polls are protracted.

It has been shewn that be the number of voters what it may, the poll is to be taken in one fixed place; it is now to be seen how long that place is liable

liable to be exposed to the dreadful tumult, disorders, and outrages which are but too well known to attend Election contests.

By an Act passed in the 25th Geo. 3. c. 84. (1785) for "the better regulation of polls and scrutines," the continuance of polls is authorized to last during *fifteen days*.

Of the reasons which induced the Legislature to acknowledge the propriety of so very tedious a proceeding, your Committee can give no account, but they will endeavour to explain the nature of the methods practised to fill up the number of days thus liberally allowed. They must not however here omit to remark, that by the 11th Geo. 1. c. 18. (unrepealed by the statute above quoted) the poll for *the city of London* must be closed within *seven days* from its commencement; a limitation the more extraordinary, as the voters in the city of London amount to a number not exceeded by any place in England, except Westminster.

If a Candidate wish to procrastinate, he has several ways open to him by which he may protract the poll to the utmost extent of its legal limits.

He may direct his friends to vote one by one as slowly as possible. By a custom, which from practice has obtained the force of a law, a poll cannot be closed unless no vote be tendered within a reasonable time after the returning officer has made three proclamations. By having
a vote

a vote therefore ready to tender after every second proclamation, a Candidate may continue to protract the business of the poll to such a length as may tend to the infinite vexation and expence of his antagonist.

But should it happen that he, whose interest it is to delay, has not friends enough at hand to *feed the poll*, (as it is called) in the above manner, the law provides him with another mode of carrying his point. He may require all the *oaths* to be actually administered which certain statutes authorize him to insist upon. These are in number no less than six, viz. the oath of *Allegiance*, the oath of *Supremacy*, the *Bribery Oath*, the oath of *Residence*, the *Declaration of Test*, and the oath of *Abjuration*. The act of giving a single vote may thus be converted into a tedious and troublesome operation.

Should neither of the before-mentioned expedients be thought sufficient, there still remains a never-failing source of procrastination in the complicated and ill-ascertained qualifications and disqualifications of Electors. Dull indeed must be the counsel who attend an Election, if in the way of objection or reply they cannot contrive to lengthen the proceedings to the utmost extent of their client's wishes.

Your Committee come now to speak of the power entrusted to the returning officer, and which, in fact, in all corporate towns, is the power of the select body who choose him.

Of

Of the various means of influence and corruption thrown into the hands of these select bodies by the present system of Elections, your Committee could speak largely did they not fear the detail would be too extensive for the limits of their report. They therefore make no comments upon the number of civic-honours, and employments, with which these formidable bodies can tempt the ambition, or the interests of the opulent; they forbear to observe upon the controul they obtain over the lower class of people, by the terrors of their magisterial authority; they say nothing of the influence derived from the power of granting or refusing licenses, from the discretion with which they are frequently invested in the distribution of public charities, or the weight they possess from the appointment of parish officers, and the superintendence of poor rates, and parochial assessments;—your Committee in this place will only call your attention to the power they enjoy through the medium of *the returning officer*.

The returning officer is vested with the entire and uncontrouled superintendence of whatever relates to the conduct of an Election. He is entrusted with absolute authority from the hour of his receiving the precept, to the hour in which he makes his return; for the law reposes the most unbounded confidence in his wisdom and his honesty, as will be seen by the following statement of the various discretionary powers committed to him. When

When he receives the precept from the Sheriff, he is to make proclamation of the day of Election; and *this he may*, without assigning any reason for so doing, *bring on either on the 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th day*, as to him may seem good to enlarge or curtail the notice. A variety of cases may readily be conceived in which this power of expediting or protracting might be of infinite importance to the interests of the Candidates, but your Committee will only mention two, viz. where freemen have been made by redemption or purchase, and want a few days to compleat the twelve months, before the expiration of which, they cannot legally vote; or where the right being in inhabitants householders, or persons paying scot and lot, some of them have not finished the six months residence which the statute requires as necessary to constitute an inhabitant.

When the day of Election is fixed, *the returning officer is to appoint the poll clerks*; and the increasing or reducing the number of these, tends, in populous places, materially to expedite or retard the proceedings.

During the time of the Election *the returning officer has the peace of the borough under his care*, and he may, at his discretion, create as many assistant constables as he may choose to think there is occasion for;—these he will scarcely select but from among those who are in the same interest with himself.

But

But though he is thus empowered to provide for the preservation of the peace, *the existence of tumults and riots gives him a fresh opportunity of exercising his discretion.* By the 25th of Geo. III. it is enacted, that the poll must be kept open a certain number of hours in every day, "unless prevented by *any unavoidable accident.*" What is "an unavoidable accident," the returning officer is to decide; so that the whole operation of this provision of the law is left to his discretion. Particularly it rests with him to determine, in the event of any *disturbance*, whether it require an adjournment, and for *how long*.

But the great source from which a returning officer derives his consequence and power, remains yet to be stated.

Hitherto your Committee have only spoken of duties which require no more than honest intentions to discharge properly;—they now come to consider a trust reposed in him, for the due execution of which not only integrity, but peculiar discernment, penetration, and legal ability are absolutely necessary.

The extreme importance annexed to the proper discharge of the duties of which your Committee are now about to speak, cannot be better explained than by examining into the precautions taken by the legislature on another occasion of precisely the same nature.

A trial of the merits of an Election before a Committee of the House of Commons, is no more

more than a repetition of the trial had before the returning officer at the time of the poll. The points in discussion are the same, and the regulations thought necessary by Parliament for the investigation of them upon the appeal, abundantly prove the intricacies in which the present system of Election laws are involved, and the strong temptations to which the judgments of those who are to decide, are virtually acknowledged to be exposed.

To enquire into the merits of a petition complaining of an undue return of a Member to serve in Parliament, when the question is brought before the House of Commons, it is thought necessary to secure impartiality by choosing a jury of thirteen by ballot; and to prevent the inconvenience that would arise if the lot should fall on thirteen gentlemen, unaccustomed to judicial proceedings, the parties are permitted to nominate two more, who are added to them.

With such caution it is thought necessary to constitute the court, which, *upon the appeal*, is to enquire into the disputed rights of voting, the qualifications, and disqualifications of Electors, and the various legal distinctions which arise from the operation of so extensive a body of statutes as those relative to Elections. The Committee so appointed have also full power to send for persons, papers, and records, and to examine witnesses upon oath.

At the Election itself the same trust is committed to *one man*, who, though originally only a *ministerial* officer, is vested with equal authority to decide, but left to form that decision from the mere assertions of partial witnesses not speaking upon oath, and to oppose whose testimony, whatever he may suspect, or either party demand, he can neither compel the attendance of persons, nor the production of written evidence. All disputable points of law which arise in the course of an Election, are submitted to his *sole* determination. *He* is to settle what shall or shall not be received as evidence, and arbitrarily to decide upon all doubtful votes which he may admit, or reject at his pleasure. In a word, to his *uncontrouled judgment*, and to the *purity of his motives* in the exercise of it, the House of Commons looks for the legal and true Representative of the People.

The magnitude of the trust, and the corrupt practices of which those who possess it are to be suspected, your Committee apprehend they have sufficiently shewn, by stating *the jealousy with which the Legislature delegates it to its own Members*. Why they should display so much less anxiety for wisdom and integrity in the taking of the original poll than in its revision, your Committee do not presume to guess, but a due attention to facts compels them to assert, that it cannot be from any reasonable prepossession in favour of returning officers, because your
Committee

Committee must report them to be, very frequently *notoriously illiterate and needy*; very generally *avowed partizans of one of the Candidates*; and almost always *appointed by intrigue or cabal*. Of the numerous petitions presented to Parliament, there is scarcely one but what contains some charge against them either for *partiality or corruption*; and of the various mal-practices in which they have been detected, and of the multitude of offences of which they have been convicted, let the journals of Parliament, from the first volume to the last, bear testimony.

Your Committee having thus explained the manner in which Elections are conducted, come now to state *the nature of the remedy provided by the legislature, in all cases where the propriety of the return is disputed*.

There are various statutes existing, upon which actions may be brought against returning officers wilfully neglecting their duty, or making false returns; but as these only *give damages*, and do not *affect the seat in Parliament*, your Committee conceive it unnecessary here to recapitulate them, and therefore proceed immediately to the very celebrated remedy introduced in the 10th year of his Majesty's reign, and commonly known by the name of *Mr. Grenville's act*.

The operation of this appeal, of late years so much extolled, your Committee are under the painful necessity of declaring to be a source of

vexatious delay and intolerable expence; and they call the following facts to confirm their assertion.

The last General Election took place in the month of June 1790, and the petitions presented to Parliament, complaining of undue returns, were in number 39; * of these *twenty-one* were decided *within twelve months*; *nine more within two years*, and the opening of the year 1793 has seen the House of Commons with difficulty procure Committees to proceed upon the complaints of the remainder. It is to be observed, that the persons returned, *exercise*, till the petitions against them are brought to a hearing, *every privilege of a Member of Parliament*; and it has happened, that men have sat in the House, and voted during the two last Sessions of the present Parliament, without, as it has afterwards appeared, having had any pretensions whatever, beyond the good wishes of a pliant returning officer. The event of the petitions, now depending, may possibly shew, that some even sit three Sessions (or *one half of the usual duration of a Parliament's existence*) with as little right on their side.

Such is the manner in which the House of Commons postpones the decision of the appeals brought before it. When at last the suitors have the fortune to procure a hearing, the length to which the proceedings are protracted

* See the votes of the House of Commons.

exceeds all bounds. The court can only spare time to sit five hours in each day, and the number of days which may be consumed in the trial of a petition, will appear from the following account of the duration of some of those which have been tried within these last ten years.*

	Committee appointed	Report made	Trial lasted Days
1784 Downton	17th January	19th July	- 32
1784 Ivelchester	29th June	21st July	- 22
1785 Bedford county	18th March	19th May	- 62
1785 Cricklade	14th February	4th April	- 49
1785 Downton	17th February	9th March	- 20
1785 Penryn	24 February	18th March	- 22
1785 Southwark	3d March	4th April	- 32
1786 Seaford	22d February	13th March	- 19
1787 Norwich	15th February	9th March	- 22
1789 Colchester	26th February	6th April	- 39
1789 Westminster	3d April	6th July	- 95
1791 Carlisle	25th February	14th March	- 17
1791 Exeter	4th March	23d March	- 19
1791 Ludgerhall	29th March	24th April	- 17
1791 Oakhampton	3d February	28th February	- 25
1791 Fowey	8th February	7th March	- 27
1791 Steyning	15th February	7th March	- 20
1791 Downton	7th April	17th May	- 40
1791 Newcastle (S.)	23d February	21st March	- 26
1792 Horsham	16th February	10th March	- 22
1792 Steyning	13th March	5th April	- 23
1792 Seaford	28th February	19th March	- 19
1792 Cirencester	5th March	10th May	- 66

Your Committee having thus shewn the *delay* and *inconvenience* to which they who apply for redress to the House of Commons, are exposed, have only to state the *expense* to which

* See the votes of the House of Commons.

they are likewise subjected, in order that a thorough knowledge may be had of the situation in which petitioners are placed, who appeal from the decision of the returning officer.

Your Committee might lay before you numerous accounts, and those perfectly authentic, of the enormous sums expended by parties having petitions tried before the House of Commons, but, always preferring to quote those facts which are easiest to be proved, they will only avail themselves of the particular cases where the charges have been recorded.

By the 28th Geo. III. where petitions are reported to have been frivolous and vexatious, *taxed costs are allowed*; by referring therefore to those petitions which have been so reported, your Committee are enabled, from authority, to give a general idea of the expences attending an appeal to the House of Commons. They only beg it may be remembered, that the amounts stated underneath, are the *taxed*, and not the *real* costs, which they understand to have been nearly double, and that they are the charges defrayed by only *one* of the parties.

The hearing of the petition for Barnstaple lasted 8 days—

taxed costs				£s ^d
1791 Westminster	2 days	-	-	396
1791 Colchester	2 days	-	-	460
1791 Lauder	2 days	-	-	240
1791 Orkney	3 days	-	-	198
1791 Bodmyn	1 day	-	-	

Your

Your Committee will sum up all that has been said respecting the mode of conducting Elections, and the operations of Mr. Grenville's acts, by a plain narrative of the progress of two recent contests. The *first* at *Seaford*, where the number of voters is less than 90; the *second* at *Westminster*, the most populous borough in England.

At *Seaford*, the object of one of the Candidates was to protract the Election till twenty-six of his friends had completed the six months residence, which the law requires to constitute inhabitancy, and of which term, when the dissolution of Parliament took place in June 1790, *seventeen days* were wanting.

The means adopted on the occasion to obviate this difficulty, were attended with success. The returning officer was cautious, and patient. Exercising his discretionary power to the utmost extent, he did not bring on the Election till the *eighth day** after receiving the precept, and the remaining *nine days* were consumed in pursuing the methods mentioned in the former part of this report. The qualifications and disqualifications of the voters were canvassed at full length, and their principles and purity ex-

* In 1784 the returning officer for *Seaford* chose to be as much expeditious in his proceedings as in 1790 he was too dilatory. He brought on the election on the *fourth*; the consequence of which was, that it was determined to have been *void*, and the parties were exposed to the expence of a second contest.

amined by the test of every oath which the law has at any period invented against popery, bribery, &c.—The counsel argued, the returning officer doubted, the Candidate harangued, and the Electors swore, till the necessary number of days were past, which qualified the twenty-six new inhabitants to vote. The poll then closed and the Candidate, whose interest it had been to procrastinate, carried his point, merely by manœuvre and delay.

The losing Candidate presented a petition to the House of Commons against this return, but could not obtain a hearing till the 28th of February, 1792. A Committee was then appointed, which after sitting nineteen days, reported to the House on the 19th of March, that the Member returned was not duly elected, and that his opponent was entitled to the seat—a seat, of which he had been illegally deprived near two years, because the returning officer required nine days to poll less than ninety votes, and the recovery of which was attended with an expence perfectly incompatible with every idea of free Representation.

The second case to which your Committee beg your attention, relates to Westminster.

The Election came on the 18th of July, 1788, and the poll continued 14 days. A petition was presented to Parliament, complaining of an undue return, and it came to a hearing on the 3d of April, 1789.

The

The Committee continued to sit till the 18th of June, when they came to the following most extraordinary Resolutions.

Resolved, " That from the progress which
 " the Committee have hitherto been enabled to
 " make, since the commencement of their pro-
 " ceedings, as well as from an attentive confi-
 " deration of the different circumstances relating
 " to the cause, a final decision of the business
 " before them cannot take place in the course
 " of the present Session, and that NOT IMPRO-
 " BABLY THE WHOLE OF THE PRESENT PAR-
 " LIAMENT MAY BE CONSUMED IN A TEDIOUS
 " AND EXPENSIVE LITIGATION.

Resolved, " That from the necessary length
 " of the proceeding, and the approach of a
 " General Election, which must occur not later
 " than spring 1791, (*nearly two years distant*)
 " THE PROSECUTION OF THE CAUSE ON THE
 " PART OF THE PETITIONERS PROMISES TO BE
 " FRUITLESS, AS FAR AS IT RESPECTS THE
 " REPRESENTATION OF WESTMINSTER IN THE
 " PRESENT PARLIAMENT.

" Resolved, " That it be recommended to
 " the petitioners to withdraw their petition un-
 " der the special circumstances of the case."

The business, however, proceeded till the 6th of July, when *the petitioner was obliged to relinquish his claim, after in vain attempting to bring it to a final issue in the course of a hearing which lasted*
 ABOVE THREE MONTHS.

In

In all this long period, the only act of the Committee which bore even the appearance of a judicial decision, was a resolution respecting *the right of voting in Westminster*. Against this determination an appeal was presented to the House of Commons on behalf of the Electors, in July 1789, and, though regularly renewed in every Session, has not yet been favoured with a hearing, notwithstanding it has been before the House *above three years*. The consequence is, that, *at this hour the right of voting in Westminster remains unsettled*, and should another contest take place, it would again expose the Candidates to a tedious, expensive, and probably fruitless litigation.

Your Committee conceive they cannot better conclude this part of their enquiry than by a short statement of the general results which arise from it ;

They therefore report, that it appears,

That, the number of Representatives assigned to the different counties is grossly disproportioned to their comparative extent, population, and trade.

That, a majority of what are called the Representatives of the Commons are returned by the 170th part of the male subjects of England paying taxes, even supposing these only to amount to two millions.

That, the partial distribution of the elective franchise, which subdivides this 170th part into 155 other parts, commits the choice of Representatives

sentatives to select bodies of men of such limited numbers, as renders them an easy prey to the artful, or a ready purchase to the wealthy.

That the right of voting is regulated by no uniform or rational principle respecting either property or condition. That from the caprice with which it has been varied, and the obscurity in which it has become involved by time and contradictory decisions, it is a source of infinite confusion, litigation, and expence.

That the manner in which elections are conducted is disgraceful to the name of free election. That it is inconvenient to the elector, and ruinous to the candidate. That it is a scourge to the honest and peaceable, and a harvest to the dissolute and corrupt.

That the power given to returning officers, too often, (except in counties) men of extreme ignorance, or known depravity, added to the delay of the House of Commons in attending to the petitions for redress, frequently deprives the electors of their true Representative for years.

That the present system of election laws which professes to qualify a man for Parliament who possesses three hundred pounds a year, is only calculated to insult the People with the shew of an independent choice, because, by its operation, it disables all, who have not incomes of at least as many thousands, from becoming candidates.

Lastly,

Lastly, *That* the length of the duration of Parliaments, subjected to the will of the Crown, tends to make the Representative independent of the constituent, to render him submissive to the commands of those in power, and to disturb "that happy union and good agreement between the King and People," which, by our ancestors at the Revolution, was so constitutionally asserted to arise "from frequent and new elections."

OF PRIVATE PATRONAGE, AND THE INFLUENCE POSSESSED BY PEERS AND COMMONERS.

Your Committee having explained the nature of the Representation considered with respect to its separate and distinct parts, having shewn the defective and inconvenient materials of which it is composed, and pointed out the difficulties thereby thrown in the way of the fair Elector and the independent Candidate, come now to investigate the operation of the whole, and to examine and report what is the general result as it affects the security of the Constitution, and the liberties of the country at large.

Your Committee are aware, that, in speaking upon this head, they are about to enter on a subject which they might easily discover many inducements to pass over in silence; but they feel that they have undertaken a public duty of

an importance which precludes all idea of listening to any private considerations, and they eagerly embrace the opportunity of proving their sincerity in the cause of the people, by a full, an explicit, and an impartial statement.

To this line of conduct, even if they were not urged by principle, they would be compelled by motives of regard for the character of that Society to which they have the honor to belong. Such unprecedented pains have been taken to discredit the intentions with which you have professed to act; such high and unexpected authorities have been exerted to hold you up rather as the enemies than the friends of the people, that your Committee conceive it their duty, to enable you to join issue with your calumniators, and, prepared with every evidence the cause requires, to appeal to the sober judgment of the country.

Your Committee report, that the gross defects and abuses which, under the preceding heads, they have proved to exist in the present mode of Representation, have established A SYSTEM OF PRIVATE PATRONAGE, which renders the condition of the House of Commons *practically* as follows.

71 Peers and the Treasury nominate	90
Procure the return of	77
Patronage of 71 Peers and the Treasury	167
91 Commoners nominate	82
Procure the return of	57
Patronage of 91 Commoners	139
162 return	306 out of 513 Members.

This

This statement your Committee are aware will create considerable surprize; and as many may be taught to doubt its accuracy, they have thought it necessary to explain the nature of their calculation, and on what it is founded, in such a manner, as that every man may be enabled to correct their errors, if they have erred, or to convince himself of the truth of what they have asserted.

With this view they have given the names of the different Patrons, and are happy that those names are of too respectable a description to afford the most remote suspicion that any invidious motives have produced the mention of them.

The Patronage your Committee have divided under two heads—*Nomination*, and *Influence*; and attributed it to distinct persons, under the descriptions of *Peers* and *Commoners*.

With respect to this first division, your Committee desire to have it understood that,

By a *nomination*, they would describe that *absolute authority in a borough which enables the patron to command the return*. The number of places set down in this class might, your Committee have every reason to believe, be with strict propriety considerably encreased, but from a wish to avoid all cavil, they have confined themselves to such boroughs as are under undoubted controul. These, in general, are the private property of the patrons, or have the

right

right of voting vested in a small corporate body, the majority of whom are his immediate dependents.

By *Influence*, your Committee would describe that degree of weight acquired in a particular county, city, or borough, which accustoms the electors on all vacancies to expect the recommendation of a candidate by the patron, and induces them, either from fear, from private interest, or from incapacity to oppose, because he is so recommended, to adopt him.

This distinction between Nominations and Influence has appeared necessary for several reasons. It is true that the effect of both is nearly alike, but still it might seem improper to speak of them in the same terms. The Representation of *Old Sarum* and of *Chester* could not, for instance, without much offence, be classed under the same head, and there are many other places, where, though the will of the patron is constantly complied with, it would perhaps seem too harsh a phrase to say that he can command.

On the subject of the *counties*, which are stated to be under influence, your Committee are especially anxious to say a word or two in explanation.

They would be sorry that, owing to any misapprehension, it should be conceived that in every instance where they use the word *influence*, an injurious sense should be annexed to it. Property, they well know, will always have a considerable

considerable operation, nor is it meant to insinuate that, because there is said to be influence, corruption must necessarily be supposed to exist. Where fortune enables, and disposition induces a man to discharge the friendly offices of neighbourhood and connexion with zeal and liberality, your Committee would be deeply concerned to be suspected of a wish to arraign, or in any manner decry the extensive and honorable attachment which such a line of conduct must, and ought to procure.

Property may however obtain a degree of weight beyond what is natural to it. It may be enabled to excite fear as well as to procure respect; and without purchasing a majority, or controuling its dependents, it may acquire such power as to overcome and bear down all opposition.

Precisely this species of power is thrown into the hands of the wealthy, by the system on which at this day elections are conducted. It confines the choice of the Electors within the ranks of opulence, because, though it cannot make riches the sole object of their affection and confidence, it can and does throw obstacles almost insurmountable in the way of every man who is not rich, and thereby secures to a select few the capability of becoming candidates.

This monopoly has not however been obtained without many and vigorous struggles, but it has unfortunately happened that resistance
has

has but served to tighten the cord. Contests have been found to be attended with such extravagance, party heat, tumult, expence, and litigation, and the dreadful effects of these have spread so wide and endured so long, that, on the prospect of a vacancy, more consideration is now bestowed to contrive the means of *preserving the peace of the county*, (the phrase used on these occasions) than to secure its freedom and independence.

The measures adopted for this preservation of the peace are different in different counties; in all, however, they are founded on *some sort of compromise*, by which a sacrifice is made of at least one half of the Freeholders' Franchise.

County Elections may be said to be, in general, contested, either by *two political parties*, or by *two great families*, or by *a great family and the gentry*. In all these cases the expedient usually had recourse to, to prevent the consequences of a struggle, is *for each of the contending interests to name one Member*.

Where political parties alone are concerned, it cannot indeed be said that such an arrangement comes under the head of influence or patronage, because in truth its only operation is entirely to strike out of the Representation the County compromised; but where *the concessions are made from one great family to another*, or *from the gentry to a great family*, as is often avowedly the case, can there be a question as to

the situation in which at least one of the Members returned by every County, so circumstanced, is placed? *Does he not owe his seat to a Patron?* And is it in the power of the mass of the Freeholders to break the combinations thus formed against them, unless they shall have the very peculiar good fortune to find a man, who, with principles sufficiently independent to set him above the fear of offending those in power, is ready to incur the fatigues, and able to defray the enormous expence of a contest, conducted upon the gross system of abuse which has been explained by your Committee in the former part of their report?

Much of what has here been said respecting the causes which contribute to bring the Representation of Counties within the reach of a patron's influence, applies to populous cities, and great towns: but in those there is also the additional influence to be stated which is obtained through the medium of the returning officer. From the strictest enquiries your Committee have been able to make, they are convinced that, in nine corporate towns out of ten, *one Member, at least, is returned by the select body.* Of the fact the curious may easily inform themselves; but let it be remembered that, if it should be ascertained, the sole question will then be, who influences the select body?

It would have been an endless task to have discussed all the information your Committee have

have received respecting the probability of alterations in the state of the patronage at the next Election; and as the whole of these suggestions are built on speculation, and whether well grounded or otherwise, *only change the name of the patron*, they have thought it best to confine themselves to what appears to have been the state of the various interests at the *last* General Election.

With respect to the *influence of the Treasury*, your Committee apprehend that it will occasion much surprize to find it apparently so limited, but it must be observed, that this is not a species of influence subject to any direct proof, and therefore your Committee have, wherever they could, avoided the mention of it, by inserting the name of the ostensible patron, even where he openly holds a place during pleasure under Government.

The sources whence the influence of the Treasury is derived in the five towns mentioned in the table, your Committee apprehend to be too notorious to require any explanation.

With regard to the distinction respecting *Peers* and *Commoners*, your Committee beg to be understood as having made it, because they have thought it their duty to point out the extent of an interference, which the House of Commons has uniformly declared to be unconstitutional.

At the commencement of every session, the following resolutions, are entered on the journals.

Resolved, " That no Peer of this Realm hath any right to give his vote in the Election of any Member to serve in Parliament."

Resolved, " That it is a high infringement upon the liberties and privileges of the Commons of Great-Britain, for any Lord of Parliament, or any Lord-Lieutenant of any County, to concern themselves in the Elections of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament."

Your Committee have been the more disposed to take notice of these Resolutions, because the power of the House of Lords, in matters of Election, has been prodigiously encreased within the last ten years *by the creation of nine PEERS, who return, by nomination and influence, no less than twenty-four MEMBERS to the House of Commons.*— If, therefore, the interference of the Lords in the Elections of the Commons be, as the latter uniformly declare, a *high infringement* of their liberties and privileges, your Committee must report those liberties and privileges to have been of late subject to the most alarming and frequent attacks.

Your Committee have thus endeavoured to explain the nature of the distinction they have made respecting the patronage of the different places. Subject to these observations they proceed

ceed to lay before you the following table, and will only add the most solemn assurance, that it is, to the best of their knowledge, a true and unexaggerated statement. If in any instance they have erred by attributing a patronage to any nobleman or gentleman of which he is not possessed, let it be considered whether, in correcting the mistake, you can do more than *erase one name for the purpose of inserting another*, which, as no party suggestions ought here to have weight, cannot make any substantial difference. The object of your Committee is not to shew that this or that particular set of men have obtained the command of the Representation, but to prove that the *people have lost it*: If, therefore, they shall even have committed such an error as to have put down any place in the table which is not only uninfluenced by the patron there named, but also uninfluenced by any single patron whatever, let it be examined, whether such place do not come under the description of being *compromised by political parties*; if so, it is equally taken away from the service of the people, though it cannot be said to be given to the controul of an individual.

PATRONAGE OF PEERS.

NAMES OF PATRONS.

NOMINATIONS.

INFLUENCE.

Total Members
to be returned
by Peers.

NAMES OF PATRONS.	NOMINATIONS.	INFLUENCE.	Total
Earl of Lonsdale	{ 1 for Appleby 2 - Cockerhouth 2 - Haslemere	influence 2 for Welmorland	7
Lord Mount Edgcumbe	{ 1 - Bodmin 1 - Leftwithiel 2 - Plympton 2 - Liskeard 2 - Grampond	{ 1 - Fowey	6
Lord Elliott	{ 2 - St. Germain's 2 - Boroughbridge 2 - Aldborough (Y.) 2 - Buckingham 2 - St. Mawes 2 - Marlborough 2 - Great Bedwin 2 - Launceston 2 - Newport (C.) 2 - Woodstock 1 - Heytesbury 2 - Malton 1 - Higham Ferrers	{ 1 - Newark 1 - East Retford 1 - Buckinghamshire 1 - Aylebury	6
Duke of Newcastle			6
Marquis of Buckingham			6
Lord Aylebury			4
Duke of Northumberland			4
Duke of Marlborough			5
Earl Fitzwilliam			5
Number of Peers Patrons 9	nom. 38	influence 11	49

NAMES or PLACES.

NOMINATIONS.

INFLUENCE.

Total Members
returned by electors.

Brought forward.	60	Brought forward	34		96
Duke of Grafton	animates	influences	{ 1 for Bury 1 for Thetford.		2
Duke of Dorset	2 for Grinstead				2
Duke of Bridgewater	2 — Brackley				2
Lord Beverley	2 — Beccallion				2
Lord Camelford	2 — Old Sarum				2
Lord Foley	2 — Droitwich				2
Lord Bute	1 — Bollnacy			1 — Worcester	3
Lord Portsmouth				1 — Cardiff	3
Lord Orford				1 — Andover	3
Lord Malmebury	1 — Cattle Riding				1
Lord Hardwick	1 — Christchurch				1
Lord Somers	1 — Ryegate			1 — Cambridgehire	2
Lord Townshend	1 — Ryegate				1
Lord Harrowby	1 — Tamworth				1
Lord Darlington	2 — Tiverton				2
Lord Bulkeley	1 — Wischelles				1
Lord Powis	1 — Beaumais				1
Duke of Bolton	1 — Montgomery				1
Lord Spencer				1 — Totnefs	1
Lord Falkmouth				1 — Oakhampton	2
Lord Thacker	2 — Truro			1 — St. Alban's	2
Lord Guildford	1 — Appleby				1
Lord Camden	1 — Banbury				1
				1 — Bath	1
Number of Peers Patronised by them.	85				
				Total	331

[042]

NAMES or PATRONS.		NOMINATIONS.		INFLUENCE.	
Brought forward	49	85	Brought forward	44	
Lord Ponsett	<i>animator</i>	-	-	<i>influencer</i>	2 for Bridgewater
Lord Grosvenor	-	-	-	-	2 - Chester
Lord Bathurst	-	-	-	-	2 - Cirencester
Lord Shaftesbury	-	-	-	-	1 - Dorchester
Lord Berkeley	-	-	-	-	1 - Gloucestershire
Lord Brownlow	-	-	-	-	1 - Grantham
Lord Pembroke	-	2 for Wilton	-	-	-
Lord Oxford	-	-	-	-	1 - Radnorshire
Duke of Manchester	-	-	-	-	1 - New Radnor
Lord Pelham	-	-	-	-	1 - Huntingdonshire
Duke of Portland	-	-	-	-	1 - Lewes
Lord Uxbridge	-	-	-	-	1 - Nottinghamshire
-	-	1 - Milbourn Port	-	-	1 - Anglica
Lord Exeter	-	-	-	-	1 - Carnarvon
Lord Warwick	-	-	-	-	2 - Stamford
Lord Petre	-	-	-	-	2 - Warwick
Lord Clarendon	-	-	-	-	1 - Thetford
Lord Bellingbrooke	-	-	-	-	1 - Wootton Bassett
Lord Carlile	-	-	-	-	1 - Wootton Bassett
Lord Onslow	-	-	-	-	2 - Morpeth
Lord Walpole	-	-	-	-	1 - Guildford
Lord Grimston	-	-	-	-	1 - Lynn
Duke of Leeds	-	-	-	-	1 - St. Alban's
-	-	-	-	-	1 - Penryn
Number of Peers Patroned	71	nom.	88		72
					Total
					161.

PATRONAGE OF COMMONERS.

NAMES of PATRONS.	NOMINATIONS.		INFLUENCE.	Total Members returned by Peers.
	Brought forward	71	Brought forward	71
The Treasury	nominate	2 for Queenborough	by names	1 for Dover
Ditto	-	-	-	1 - Rochester
Ditto	-	-	-	1 - Plymouth
Ditto	-	-	-	2 - Windsor
71 Peers and the Treasury	nom.	90	-	77
				167

NAMES of PATRONS.	NOMINATIONS.		INFLUENCE.	Total Members returned by Commoners.
	Brought forward	71	Brought forward	71
William Drake, Esq;	nominate	2 for Agmondesham	by names	1 for Ludlow
Lord Clive	-	2 - Bishop's Caffe	-	-
Rev. Mr. Holmes	-	1 - Newport (Hants)	-	-
Sir J. St. Aubyn, Bart.	-	1 - Yarmouth (Hants)	-	-
Rogers, Esq;	-	1 - Helstone	-	-
W. Pulteney, Esq;	-	-	-	-
Commoners Patrons	6	9	4 - Weymouth, &c.	5
			1 - Shrewsbury	15

NAMES OF PATRONS.		NOMINATIONS.		INFLUENCE.		Total Men- ber returned by Commons.
Brought forward	26	39	1 for Ashburton	Brought forward	15	
Sir R. Palke, Bart.	nominatee	1			1 for Honiton	1
Sir G. Youngs, Bart.					1 — Bury	1
Sir C. Davenport, Bart.					1 — Chippenham	1
Sir S. Pludger, Bart.					1 — Deane, Shire	1
Sir W. W. Wynne						1
Lord Wellesley		1	Bevalley			1
Lord Middleton		1	Whitchurch			1
Sir C. Gould Morgan					1 — Brecon	1
W. Jolliffe, Esq.		2	Petersfield			2
J. Robinson, Esq.		2	Harwich			2
— Wilkins, Esq.		2	Malmsbury			2
R. Troward, Esq.		2	Heber		2 — St. Ives	2
W. Peard, Esq.						2
T. P. Leigh, Esq.		2	Newtown (Lancashire)			2
W. C. Meddyecott, Esq.		1	Milbourne Port			1
J. Calcraft, Esq.		2	Wareham			2
J. B. Church, Esq.		2	Wendover			2
Lady Irwin		2	Horsham			2
Mrs. Allanton		2	Ripon			2
Sir Jonathan Phillips		2	Carnesford			2
Thomas Lister, Esq.		1	Chilheroe			1
P. A. Curzon, Esq.		1	Chilheroe			1
John Mortlock, Esq.					2 for Cambridge Town	2
C. Anderson Pelham, Esq.					2 for Crimby	2
Commoners Patrons	30	65			16	91
					Total	

NAMES OF PATRONS.		NOMINATIONS.		INFLUENCE.		Total Mem- bers returned by Common.
Brought forward	go	Brought forward	26			
J. F. Luttrell, Esq;	nominate	1 for Danwich	1	2 for Minchhead	2	91
B. Barne, Esq;	-	-	-	-	1	1
J. Bond, Esq;	-	1 for Corfe Castle	1	-	1	1
H. Banks, Esq;	-	1 for Corfe Castle	1	-	1	1
E. Lattrell, Esq;	-	1 Northallerton	1	-	1	1
H. Pierce, Esq;	-	1 Northallerton	1	-	1	1
R. Ladbroke, Esq;	-	1 Garton	1	-	1	1
W. Currie, Esq;	-	1 Garton	1	-	1	1
W. P. Alne A'Court, Esq;	-	1 Heytesbury	1	-	1	1
B. Howard, Esq;	-	1 Cattle Riving	1	-	1	1
George Hunt, Esq;	-	1 Rodman	1	-	1	1
Lord Milford	-	-	-	-	-	-
C. Forster, Esq;	-	1 Yarmouth (Hants)	1	1 Haverfordwest	1	1
J. C. Jervoise, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Wenlock	1	1
C. Stuart, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Bridport	1	1
G. Rolfe, Esq;	-	1 Christchurch	1	-	1	1
W. Evelyn, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Hythe	1	1
St. C. F. Radcliffe, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Derby	1	1
T. W. Coke, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Litchfield	1	1
T. Anfon Esq;	-	-	-	1 Marlow	1	1
W. Lee Antonie, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Marlow	1	1
T. Williams, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Denbigh	1	1
R. Middleton, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Fowey	1	1
Philip Radleigh, Esq;	-	-	-	1 Wells	1	1
C. Tudway, Esq;	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commoners Patrons	75	-	-	Total	40	117

NAMES of PATRONS.	NOMINATIONS.		INFLUENCE.		Total men- bers returned by Cannon.
	Brought forward 75	77	Brought forward 40	117	
J. Dawkins, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
H. Penton, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
R. Peel, Esq;	—	1 for Tamworth	—	—	1
James Sutton, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
Whitaker, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
Sir P. Barruel, Bart.	—	—	—	—	1
John Hrenouger, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
W. Beckford, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
Sir J. Carter	—	—	—	—	1
E. Ballard, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
Edward Milward, Esq;	—	2 — Hastings	—	—	2
Thomas Lamb, Esq;	—	2 — Rye	—	—	2
P. Stephens, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
Lord Malgrave	—	—	—	—	1
R. Gamon, Esq;	—	—	—	—	1
Right Hon. T. Harley	—	—	—	—	1
Commoners 91	—	nom. 82	57	Total	139

In the preceding table your Committee have in some places stated only *one Member* to be returned by influence. The following is the list of those places, exclusive of the Counties represented in a similar manner.

Aylesbury,	Lewes,	Guildford,	Retford,
Chichester,	Arundel,	Dorchester,	Bridport,
Lynn,	Plymouth,	Seaford,	Shrewsbury,
Wells,	Boston,	Bath,	Honiton,
Cirencester,	Ludlow,	Leominster,	Rochester,
Dover,	Oxford,	Sandwich,	Salisbury.
Bodmin,			

Your Committee not being able to procure any authentic information respecting the disposition of the *second vote* in these places, have foreborn to make any estimate of it. In a few instances (most probably in all the Counties) there is reason to believe that it is exercised with a proper spirit of independence; but in general it can hardly be supposed that those who obsequiously surrender one half of their privileges, will be very scrupulous in the disposal of what remains.

The following boroughs, viz. *Stockbridge, Heydon*, and *Barnstaple*, though under the management of no particular patron, must not however be passed over in silence. The number of voters in them all does not amount to 500; and though your Committee do not think it prudent to state the sort of influence which they are informed has most weight in these places, they conceive it right to mention their names separately,

separately, and others may determine how far the Members they contribute, might with propriety be added to the list of those, with whose return to Parliament the unbiassed suffrages of the people have little or no concern.

It remains only to say a few words on the number of places *compromised by political parties*.

It has been before observed, that these arrangements *are made frequent by the intolerable expence attending contests*, to avoid which an expedient is adopted, which, in its operation, effectually destroys every principle of Representation. Your Committee here speak of those *compromises* which take place *between political parties*, and which are very distinct from those *between two contending patrons, or a patron and the electors*. In the latter cases, the compromise relates to *men*, in the former to *measures*. It is not impossible but that those who are *returned by the influence of a patron*, may, (though not the organ through which the Electors might wish to speak) in delivering their own, deliver the sentiments of the Electors; but those who are *returned by a compromise of parties*, must, to be faithful to their separate trusts, counteract the political consequence of each other, and deprive the Borough that sends them to Parliament, of all Parliamentary weight. When two gentlemen honestly and conscientiously profess principles diametrically opposite, (for your Committee are persuaded that each of the Mem-
bers

bers of the places in question is honourably attached to his party, by the conviction that such attachment is beneficial to his country) can it be said that the Borough which is represented by both of them, is represented for the purposes of more than a Turnpike, or a Paving Bill. Will it be contended that such a choice can arise from any other cause *than a dread of the consequences that would attend any attempt to ascertain the real sentiments of the majority of the electors?* Or can it be believed that men voluntarily make a sacrifice of one half of their franchise, and that too in such a way as to render the half they retain of no value?

Let it not be thought that your Committee wish to cast any imputation on the Electors who submit to these compromises. They do not merit any, for, in truth, they adopt them on compulsion; neither, while such a majority is returned in the manner that has been shewn, is it of any material consequence how or by whom the minority is elected. It has been asked why *Manchester, Birmingham*, and other populous places, do not petition for leave to send Members to Parliament, and their silence has, by the enemies to Reform, been construed into an argument in favour of the present state of the Representation; but surely these *compromises* afford at once a satisfactory answer, when it is seen that the mode of conducting Elections is such, as makes *Newcastle, Bristol, &c.*

Y

more

more anxious to wave than to exercise their privileges.

The following is a list of the places compromised by political parties—Newcastle upon Tyne—Bristol—Cheshire—Essex—York—Westminster—Leicester—Maldon—Lancashire—Gloucester—Preston—Cumberland—Herefordshire, and Suffex.

It only remains for your Committee to give the grand result of their whole enquiries, and which, if the facts on which they have relied shall be found to have been well grounded, will appear in the following

GENERAL STATEMENT.

71	Peers, and the Treasury, return	167
91	Commoners return	139
162	Peers and Commoners, with the Treasury, return	306
100	Electors at Poole return	2
102	Stockbridge	2
190	Hedon	2
250	Barnstaple	3
200	Wigan	1
54	Salisbury	1
36	Bodmyn	1
160	Plymouth	1
200	Boston	1
83	Seaford	1
32	Bath	1
112	E. Retford	1
180	Bridport	1
120	Guildford	1

* Where only one Member is stated to be returned, it is to be understood that the other has been accounted for under the head of Patronage.

240	—	Lewes	1
190	—	Arundel	1
300	—	Dorchester	1

17 Boroughs, not containing, on an average, 150 voters each, return 27

2611 Persons, return to serve in Parliament, Members 327

To these 327 add 28, who are returned by *compromises*, and it will appear, in what manner such a number of the Members of the House of Commons is elected, as constitutes a MAJORITY of no less than ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVEN of the Representatives of England and Wales.

Report of the Committee of the Friends of the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Reform of Parliament, appointed to examine into the State of the Representation of Scotland.

BEFORE your Committee proceeds to the consideration of the important objects to which they conceive you chiefly intended to direct their attention, it may not be improper to mention a sort of Representation which is peculiar to North Britain; which has an irresistible tendency to give to the Crown an

undue influence in the House of Lords ; and which by a more silent, but not less effectual operation, contributes equally to the same end in the other House of Parliament.

At the Union of the two kingdoms, in the beginning of this century, the Peers of Scotland surrendered their hereditary right to seats in Parliament ; and were limited to an Elective Representation by Sixteen of their number. It is not the intention of your Committee to enter at large into the history of their elections ; it is sufficient to state, that it is universally known, that, ever since the Union, they have been considerably influenced by the Ministers of the Crown ; which species of patronage has given them an undue preponderance in the popular branch of the Legislature, by means which will be afterwards explained.

Your Committee having thus slightly touched on the state of the Scottish Peerage, and only as it has a reference to their immediate object ; they will now endeavour to fulfil their duty, by presenting to the Society a true and impartial account of the Representation of the People of Scotland in the House of Commons.

They will first establish, as they think incontrovertibly,

1. That the Constitution of the Scottish Parliament was originally popular and free.

2. That many laws, which have been enacted for the regulation of Elections, bear evident marks

marks of the combined efforts of the Crown and the Aristocracy, to *narrow* the Rights of Election.

3. That each of these laws deprived the people of some Right formerly enjoyed and exercised.

4. That, by various fictions of law, contrary to the spirit of the British Constitution, the Right of Election of Members to serve in Parliament has been transferred from those to whom it justly and naturally belonged, to others, who had no right whatsoever.

5. That these grievances have been long and severely felt by the People; that they have been often complained of; and that various statutes for their remedy have been vainly enacted and successfully eluded.

6. That the system of Representation in Scotland is now so confined and defective, that it has become a mere mockery upon the name or idea.

Although the Counties, Cities, and Burghs labour under the same Constitutional grievance, and suffer equally from the gradual deterioration of their antient condition, it will be necessary to consider their history separately, on account of the different modes in which their Rights have been circumscribed, usurped, or destroyed.

C O U N T I E S.

By the Constitution of Scotland, the Parliament being the King's Court Baron, or *Curia Regis*, he could summon all his immediate tenants to attend him there. In these remote times, service in Parliament was not considered as a profitable privilege, but as a burdensome duty; and, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, the system of Representation was introduced for the ease and benefit of the vassals or tenants. Yet, until near the end of the sixteenth century, every freeholder or tenant of the Crown was entitled to vote at Elections, however small his property might be, which sufficiently proves the ancient popularity and freedom of the institution.

In the reign of James the Sixth of Scotland, and First of England, (a monarch who was not distinguished by too great an attachment to the liberty of mankind) the right of voting was first restricted to freeholders possessing lands of forty shillings, of what was called "Old Extent;" that is of lands which were so rated in the cess or county books about the end of the thirteenth, or beginning of the fourteenth century. Your Committee wish you to observe, that this was a great and fatal blow to popular Election; for though forty shillings was made, *as in England*, the nominal standard of a vote, yet by carrying it back to a rate or valuation made three hundred years before, the value of money having

ing considerably fallen, the extent of the qualification required was very much raised.—And this circumstance points out the efficient cause of the enormous difference which subsists between England and Scotland with regard to the freedom and popularity of Election in the Counties. In England, the qualification has been allowed to keep pace with the decreasing value of money, and has therefore been extended to greater numbers of Electors. In Scotland, by the limitations to the rates and valuations of very remote periods, the right of voting has been confined to the possessors of very considerable estates, and the number of Electors has been very much diminished.

Had the Scottish Kings and Nobles stopped at this point, the evil might have been endured : but they proceeded vigorously in their career of encroachment. In the reign of Charles the Second it was enacted, that where the right of voting on an old forty shillings land could not be proved, which had become difficult, then to be enabled to vote, it should be necessary to be infest in, or seized of an estate, valued in the same reign at 400*l.* Scots annual rent. It is proper here to mention, that at this day, by the nearest average which can be made over the whole kingdom, the rent of those lands, which are valued at forty shilling “ Old Extent,” is from 70*l.* to 130*l.* sterling; and the rent of the lands valued in the reign of Charles

the Second at 400l. Scots, is now about 400l. Sterling, so that this King more than tripled the qualification required in the greatest part of the kingdom, by substituting lands, worth 400l. instead of those worth 100l. or 130l.

Even this infringement was not thought enough; under George the Second the modes of proving the existence of those old Forty Shilling Votes, were rendered more difficult, by details with which your Committee will not trouble you; they will only state that by these regulations many of those votes have disappeared, and that very few of them now remain.

Hitherto your Committee have confined themselves to the statement of those evils which arise from the magnitude of the qualifications required in Electors, and their consequent paucity: they have yet supposed that this precious right is exercised only by the real proprietors of the soil, under certain grievous and improper limitations; but they are now to describe mischiefs of another nature, which have been suffered to grow up, which have been fondly fostered in the bosom of kingly and aristocratic power; and which have totally perverted and completely overturned the real Representation of the Counties.

By the Act of Charles II. 1681, the foundation was laid for the intolerable abuses which now exist, and which certainly were never contemplated or foreseen by that Parliament. It

was

was then enacted, that the right of voting should be in persons publicly infeft in *property* or *superiority* of lands of forty shillings old extent, or 400*l.* Scots valued rent; thus making the distinction and drawing the line between *property* and *superiority*. It is necessary to explain this term of *superiority*, because from an abuse of it, the principal grievances in the Elections for Knights of the Shire in Scotland have arisen.

The feudal law supposes the King to be the sole proprietor of all the lands in the kingdom: from him his vassals hold by charter; in like manner his vassals may grant lands to be held from them by charter; these sub-vassals, may repeat the same operation *ad infinitum*; but the original or *immediate* vassal of the King has the sole right of voting or being elected to serve in Parliament. From this system the following consequences have flowed:

I. Proprietors of estates, of whatsoever value, who hold from a subject, are not entitled to vote or to be elected. It is computed, that in several Counties nearly one half of the lands are held in this manner from subjects superior; over the whole kingdom it is believed that one fifth of the lands are so held; therefore the proprietors of one fifth of the landed property, as far as that property operates, are deprived of any voice in the choosing their Representatives.

II. In this class of landholders, so excluded from this invaluable franchise, are men of estates

worth

worth from 500*l.* to 2000*l.* per annum ; but what is more to be lamented, it comprehends the best and most virtuous parts of the community, namely, the middling and smaller gentry, and the industrious yeomen and farmers who have inherited or acquired some landed property.

III. Many persons without the smallest interest in the land possess the right of voting and of being elected.

IV. It is a principle in the Constitution, that no man shall have more than one vote in the same county in his own person ; and it is another principle, that no Peer of the Realm shall have any vote at all in the election of Members to serve in the House of Commons.

By an ingenious device of the Lawyers, these two fundamental principles have been eluded : when a person of great property wishes to multiply his Votes, he surrenders his Charter to the Crown ; he appoints a number of confidential friends, to whom the Crown parcels out his estate in lots of £400 Scots valued rent : then he takes charters from these friends for the real property ; thus leaving them apparently the immediate tenants of the Crown, and consequently all entitled to vote or to be elected. This operation is equally open to Peers and great Commoners, who have availed themselves of it accordingly ; the Peers thus acquiring an influence from which they are excluded by the spirit
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and forms of the Constitution; and the great Commons extending and multiplying a right in an undue and fraudulent manner—thereby depreciating or extinguishing the franchises of the smaller proprietors, with great and manifest prejudice to the general liberty of the country.

This legal fraud began in this century, and has been chiefly practised during the present reign; it therefore derives no shelter or sanction from custom, which the folly of men allows to cover a multitude of glaring abuses. Your Committee will not dwell on the various modes by which it has been performed; they will briefly state, that the common methods have been by Life Rent Charters, Charters on Wadset or Mortgage, and Charters in Fee.

The legislature has not been blind to these mischievous innovations; nor has it been inactive in endeavouring to resist and prevent them. It has admitted, that these delusive surrenders of Charters, and consequent creations of nominal and fictitious Votes, are fraudulent in fact and principle; and it has decreed, that wherever they can be detected, they shall be illegal and void. Several laws have been passed for the prevention of such proceedings, and for the detection of such crimes. Oaths have been enacted to be taken by Freeholders claiming to poll at Elections, couched in the strongest terms, and providing as many Guards as the zeal and wisdom of the Legislature could invent; but all these

these precautions have been constantly defeated by the ingenuity of the learned profession, who have always succeeded in finding salvos for weak consciences. Gentlemen of the fairest characters, nay clergymen, have been induced by subtle explanations, and the nicest verbal subterfuges, to take these oaths, contrary to the evident intendment of the legislature, contrary to the received meaning and usage of our language, and in defiance of the general sense of their Country.

Your Committee refer you to the Acts, 12 Anne, cap. 6. and 7 Geo. II. cap. 18. not only for the terms of the oaths, but for the purpose and meaning of the laws.

The Court of Session in Scotland have been remarkably unfortunate in their endeavours to give effect to these Laws. Being composed of fifteen judges, and the sentences being decided by the majority actually present, it has necessarily happened, that from the diversity of opinions naturally incident to mankind, the decisions of the Court have frequently varied, according to the absence or attendance of the several Lords; and the same points at issue have often undergone very different and opposite determinations. Nor has the situation of the subject been much bettered by the Appeal to the House of Peers; for very contrary systems concerning these Election Laws have been maintained and carried into effect by the highest authorities in
that

that final judicature. What was law one day, and under the direction of one Judge, was not law another day, and under another Judge: and thus from the double uncertainty of the manner in which the majorities on the Scottish Bench might decide, and of the varying opinions of the high legal characters in England, men have had no security, and have been doomed to suffer *incertum jus, summa injuria*. It may not be wrong to state, that not less than six hundred law-suits have taken place within these twenty years on this subject of County Elections, which with the attendant legal operations have cost above a million of pounds sterling.

The Parliamentary Representation of the Counties in Scotland has therefore, according to the expression of a Noble Lord high in the law, "completely slid from its basis." Much undue influence has been acquired by the Crown, the Nobility, and the great Proprietors; the laws have been eluded and perverted; the number of Electors has been greatly diminished; and the Constitutional Rights of the Subject have been invaded, usurped, or annihilated.

By table, No. I, which is annexed, it will be seen, that, in two of the Counties, there are only three real Voters in each; in seven, not more than ten: in all of them respectively very few. The total number of real Voters in the whole Kingdom is 1390. Total of false, nominal

nal and fictitious Voters 1201 : and thirty-three Counties return only thirty Members, six having only the right of sending a Member to every second Parliament.

CITIES and BURGHS.

By the ancient and original Constitution of the Cities and Burghs, the Magistrates and Town Councils *were chosen by the Resident Burgesses and Proprietors of houses and lands*: this, however, was a state of freedom, too incompatible with the proud and narrow views of the Kings and Nobility, who constantly in hostility with each other, agreed in nothing but in degrading and oppressing the people. By an act passed in 1469, the Town Councils were invested with the power of electing their successors; and, in 1474, it was ordained that four persons of the Old should be annually chosen into the New Town Councils. By these laws, as far as they were effectual, the burgesses and inhabitants at large were disfranchised; they had no longer any controul over their Magistrates; and the Corporations became self-elected Juntos, totally separated in interest from their former Constituents and Fellow Citizens.

Every City or Burgh had certain estates in land, houses, fisheries, port duties, and other valuable sorts of property; the revenue arising from which was by their original Charters and Constitutions destined to be applied for the benefit

benefit of their Communities; but as soon as the Magistrates and Councils acquired the power of electing themselves in perpetuity, they administered, embezzled, and dilapidated these estates at their pleasure.

This subject is now before Parliament; and a great body of evidence has been compiled, which will soon be published, and which will throw very great light on the antient state of the Scottish Burghs. Your Committee, however, have thought proper to mention it as one great branch of the encroachment on former Rights.

It is absolutely necessary to state, that these unjust acts of 1469 and 1474 have been so detested by the People, and so much resisted in practice, that they have never been completely executed in any one place: in many of the Burghs the Burgeses continued for a long period to elect their own Magistrates, and several Charters have been granted as low down as the end of the last Century, conferring the Right of Election on the Burgeses. These acts, then, on which the present System is founded, have not the sanction derived from the submission, consent, or reverence of the People: and their repeal would not be an innovation, but a restoration of antient Rights and Privileges.

If the Cities and Burghs had suffered in their common property only, by these Tyrannical Laws, they would have been comparatively fortunate

fortunate; but as their Representatives in Parliament were to be chosen by the Magistrates and Councils, when they lost the right of Electing them, they lost all share in the choice of their Legislators; and, in this unhappy situation, they find themselves at this day.

At the Union, Edinburgh, being the capital, alone retained its Right of sending one Member to Parliament; all the other Towns were thrown into districts of fours and fives, each district being allowed to send one Member. This induced a regulation, which still more sensibly wounded the freedom of Election. By it, every Burgh now elects a Delegate; these Delegates meet by rotation at each of the Towns to elect a Representative. The place where they meet is called the presiding Burgh for that Election, and its Delegate has a casting vote in case of an equality of voices. The Burghs have no controul on their Delegates; they must trust entirely to honour for the return of the person by whom they wish to be represented; and there *have* been instances where the Delegates have corruptly betrayed their trust, and have acted contrary to the desire and expectation of their Constituents.

Another evil, deeply felt by the great Commercial Towns, is their being classed with insignificant and obscure Burghs: among many instances of this it will be sufficient to mention Glasgow, which is known to be one of the most opulent

opulent trading Cities of Great-Britain. Its number of inhabitants exceeds 60,000; its Delegate is chosen by thirty-two persons, who are self-elected; and this Delegate has only one voice of four in the choice of a Member of Parliament, in common with the Delegates of three little towns, the inhabitants of which are not more than 2000.

By table, No. II. it appears that of the fifteen Members for the Cities and Burghs, one for Edinburgh is chosen by thirty-three persons; the other fourteen by 65 Delegates, who are elected by 1220 persons;

The inhabitants of Scotland are supposed to be near two millions; their Representatives are chosen by 2543. Scotland sends forty-five Members; a single County in England, namely Cornwall, sends forty-four.

Your Committee will now conclude: they have endeavoured to be as brief as possible, and to confine themselves strictly to the most material facts. Volumes might have been written on the matter which has presented itself to their observation: but they hope with deference to the judgment of the Society, that they have more truly executed the task which they undertook by compressing, than by expanding the subject.

TABLE, &c. of Number of Electors in the Counties, &c.

No. I.

	1788		1790		Value of each Shire in Scotland, Scots money,
	Real.	Nominal.	Real and Nominal.		Rent of
1 Aberdeen,	82	96	158	235,665	8 11
2 Argyll,	23	32	43	149,595	10 0
3 Ayr	86	119	220	191,605	0 7
4 Banff	19	103	108	79,200	0 0
5 Berwick	66	87	150	178,365	7 3
6 Dumbarton	15	51	65	33,337	19 0
7 Dumfries	34	11	49	237,941	3 4
8 Edinburgh, or Mid Lothian	83	10	96	191,054	3 9
9 Fife	153	32	188	362,584	7 5
10 Forfar, or Angus	71	24	92	171,519	15 7
11 Haddington, or East Lothian	61	13	76	168,878	5 10
12 Inverness	20	83	103	75,188	9 0
13 Kincairdine	46	6	53	74,921	10 0
14 Kirkcudbright	80	72	155	114,571	19 3
15 Lanark	55	69	148	about 160,000	0 0
16 Linlithgow, or West Lothian	29	18	64	74,931	19 2
17 Moray, or Elgin	23	33	77	65,605	0 5
18 Orkney	18	21	40	56,551	9 1
19 Peebles	32	5	37	51,937	13 10
20 Perth	728	19	745	about 335,000	0 0
21 Renfrew	132	82	228	68,076	15 2
22 Ross	46	33	72	75,040	10 3
23 Roxburgh	56	49	81	315,594	14 6
24 Selkirk	27	12	40	80,397	15 6
25 Stirling	46	20	59	108,518	8 9
26 Sutherland	8	23	35	26,193	9 0
27 Wigton	29	34	53	65,338	7 8

The following six Shires elect a Member alternately. At the last Election the Shires of Caithness, Kinross, and Cromarty, returned a Member to Parliament. At the next Election the Shires of Bute, Clackmannan, and Nairn, will return a Mem-

ber

ber to Parliament; that is, Caithness, alternately with Bute, Clackmannan with Kinross, and Nairn with Cromarty. At the last Election in 1790,

28 Caithness	10	11	23	37,356	4	10
29 Cromarty	3	6	9	12,897	2	8
30 Kinross	9	17	23	26,192	11	2
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To return next Election 1790	1201	2588	3789	85,545	17	8
31 Bute	3	9	12	15,022	13	8
32 Clackmannan	5	11	16	26,482	10	10
33 Nairn	6	14	20	15,162	10	11
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	1404	1235	2638	38,791	526	7

TABLE of the Number of Electors in the Royal Burghs.

No. II.

Number of Town-
Council,
who choose each
one Delegate

Number of Delegates
in each district who
choose the Member
of Parliament.

I. Edinburgh City	33	
II. Dinwall	15	
Dornock	15	
Wick	12	
Kirkwall	23	
Tain	17	
III. Fortrose	15	
Inverness	21	
Nairn	19	
Forres	17	
IV. Elgin	17	
Banff	17	
Cullen	26	
Kintore	9	
Inverurie	15	
V. Aberdeen	19	
Montrose	21	
Brechin	13	
Aberbrothock	19	
Inverbervie	15	

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VI. Perth

VI. Perth	26	
Dundee	20	
St. Andrews	29	
Cupar	31	
Forfar	19	
VII. Crail	21	
Kilrenny	13	
Anstruther, Wester	15	5
Anstruther, Easter	19	
Pittendiech	24	
VIII. Kinghorn	23	
Dyarl	24	
Kirkaldy	21	4
Burghhead	22	
IX. Stirling	21	
Inverkeithing	15	
Dumfermline	26	5
Culrois	19	
Queensferry	21	
X. Rutherglen	29	
Glasgow	23	
Renfrew	21	4
Dumbarton	15	
XI. Jedburgh	25	
Dunbar	20	
North Berwick	14	5
Lauder	17	
Haddington	23	
XII. Peebles	17	
Linlithgow	27	
Selkirk	33	
Lanerk	17	
XIII. Dumfries	25	
Kirkcudbright	17	
Annan	22	5
Lochmaben	15	
Sanquhar	17	
XIV. Whitburn	19	
New Galloway	20	
Stranraer	18	4
Wigton	18	
XV. Irvine	17	
Rothsay	19	
Inverary	15	
Cambelltown	17	
Ayr	17	

1220

65

In Edinburgh 33 persons elect one Member of Parliament. In each of the other 14 districts, the respective Town Councils nominate one Delegate each, and by the majority of those Delegates in each district, the Member of Parliament is elected.

Thus in Edinburgh 33 persons elect 1 Member.

In the other districts, 1220 chose 65 persons, who elect 14 Members. So that ultimately in the Burghs 98 persons elect 15

Petition praying for a Reform in Parliament, presented to the House of Commons on Monday, 6th May, 1793, by the Society, the Friends of the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of GREAT BRITAIN, in PARLIAMENT assembled.

The HUMBLE PETITION, &c. SHEWETH,

THAT by the form and spirit of the British Constitution, the King is vested with the sole Executive Power.

That the House of Lords consists of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, deriving their titles and consequence either from the Crown, or from hereditary privileges.

That these two powers, if they acted without controul, would form either a despotic Monarchy, or a dangerous Oligarchy.

That the wisdom of our ancestors hath contrived, that these authorities may be rendered not only harmless but beneficial, and be exercised for the security and happiness of the People.

That this security and happiness are to be looked for in the introduction of a third estate, distinct from, and a check upon the other two branches of the legislature; created by, representing, and responsible to the People themselves.

That so much depending upon the preservation of this third estate, in such its constitutional purity and strength, your Petitioners are reasonably jealous of whatever may appear to vitiate the one, or to impair the other.

That at the present day the House of Commons does not fully and fairly represent the People of England, which, consistently with what your Petitioners conceive to be the principles of the Constitution, they consider as a grievance, and therefore, with all becoming respect, lay their complaints before your Honourable House.

That though the terms in which your Petitioners state their grievance may be looked upon as strong, yet your Honourable House is entreated to believe that no expression is made use of for the purpose of offence.

Your Petitioners in affirming that your Honourable House is not an adequate Representation of the People of England, do but state a fact, which, if the word "Representation" be
accepted

accepted in its fair and obvious sense, they are ready to prove, and which they think detrimental to their interests, and contrary to the spirit of the Constitution.

How far this inadequate Representation is prejudicial to their interests, your Petitioners apprehend they may be allowed to decide for themselves; but how far it is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, they refer to the consideration of your Honourable House.

If your Honourable House shall be pleased to determine that the People of England ought not to be fully represented, your Petitioners pray that such your determination may be known, to the end that the People may be apprized of their real situation; but if your Honourable House shall conceive that the People are already fully represented, then your Petitioners beg leave to call your attention to the following facts:

Your Petitioners complain, that the number of Representatives assigned to the different Counties is grossly disproportioned to their comparative extent, population, and trade.

Your Petitioners complain, that the Elective Franchise is so partially and unequally distributed, and is in so many instances committed to bodies of men of such very limited numbers, that the majority of your Honourable House is elected by less than fifteen thousand Electors, which, even if the male adults in the kingdom

be estimated at so low a number as three millions, is not more than the two hundredth part of the people to be represented.

Your Petitioners complain, that the right of voting is regulated by no uniform or rational principle.

Your Petitioners complain, that the exercise of the Elective Franchise is only renewed once in seven years.

Your Petitioners thus distinctly state the subject matter of their complaints, that your Honourable House may be convinced that they are acting from no spirit of general discontent, and that you may with the more ease be enabled to enquire into the facts, and to apply the remedy.

For the evidence in support of the FIRST COMPLAINT, your Petitioners refer to the return book of your Honourable House.—Is it fitting, that Rutland and Yorkshire should bear an equal rank in the scale of County Representation; or can it be right, that Cornwall alone should, by its extravagant proportion of Borough Members, outnumber not only the Representatives of Yorkshire and Rutland together, but of Middlesex added to them? Or, if a distinction be taken between the landed and the trading interests, must it not appear monstrous that Cornwall and Wiltshire should send more Borough Members to Parliament, than Yorkshire, Lancashire, Warwickshire, Middlesex, Worcestershire, and Somersetshire united?

and

and that the total Representation of all Scotland should but exceed by one Member, the number returned for a single County in England?

The Second Complaint of your Petitioners, is founded on the unequal proportions in which the Elective Franchise is distributed, and in support of it,

They affirm, that seventy of your Honourable Members are returned by thirty-five places, where the right of voting is vested in burgage and other tenures of a similar description, and in which it would be to trifle with the patience of your Honourable House, to mention any number of voters whatever, the Elections at the places alluded to being notoriously a mere matter of form. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

They affirm, that in addition to the seventy Honourable Members so chosen, ninety more of your Honourable Members are elected by forty-six places, in none of which the number of voters exceeds fifty. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

They affirm, that in addition to the hundred and sixty so elected, thirty-seven more of your Honourable Members are elected by nineteen places, in none of which the number of voters exceeds one hundred. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

They affirm, that in addition to the hundred and ninety-seven Honourable Members so chosen,

ten, fifty-two more are returned to serve in Parliament, by twenty-six places, in none of which the number of voters exceeds two hundred. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

They affirm, that in addition to the two hundred and forty-nine so elected, twenty more are returned to serve in Parliament for Counties in Scotland, by less than one hundred Electors each, and ten for Counties in Scotland by less than two hundred and fifty each. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove, even admitting the validity of fictitious votes.

They affirm, that in addition to the two hundred and seventy-nine so elected, thirteen districts of Burghs in Scotland, not containing one hundred voters each, and two districts of Burghs, not containing one hundred and twenty-five each, return fifteen more Honourable Members. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

And in this manner, according to the present state of the Representation, two hundred and ninety-four of your Honourable Members are chosen, and, being a majority of the entire House of Commons, are enabled to decide all questions in the name of the whole people of England and Scotland.

The THIRD COMPLAINT of your Petitioners is founded on the present complicated rights of voting. From the caprice with which they have

have been varied, and the obscurity in which they have become involved by time and contradictory decisions, they are become a source of infinite confusion, litigation, and expence.

Your Petitioners need not tender any evidence of the inconveniences which arise from this defect in the Representation, because the proof is to be found in your journals, and the minutes of the different Committees who have been appointed under the 10th and 11th of the King. Your Honourable House is but too well acquainted with the tedious, intricate, and expensive scenes of litigation which have been brought before you, in attempting to settle the legal import of those numerous distinctions which perplex and confound the present rights of voting. How many months of your valuable time have been wasted in listening to the wrangling of lawyers upon the various species of burgagehold, leasehold, and freehold! How many Committees have been occupied in investigating the nature of Scot and Lot, pot-wallers, commonalty, populacy, resiant inhabitants, and inhabitants at large! What labour and research have been employed in endeavouring to ascertain the legal claims of borough-men, aldermen, port-men, select-men, burgeses, and council-men! And what confusion has arisen from the complicated operation of clashing charters, from freemen resident and non-resident, and from the different modes of obtaining the freedom of corporations by birth, by servi-
tude

tude, by marriage, by redemption, by election, and by purchase! On all these points it is how-
ever needless for your Petitioners to enlarge, when your Honourable House recollects the following facts; namely, that since the twenty-second of December, 1790, no less than twenty-one Committees have been employed in deciding upon litigated rights of voting. Of these, eight were occupied with the disputes of three Boroughs, and there are petitions from four places yet remaining before your Honourable House, waiting for a final decision to inform the Electors what their rights really are.

But the complaint of your Petitioners on the subject of the want of an uniform and equitable principle in regulating the right of voting, extends as well to the arbitrary manner in which some are excluded, as to the intricate qualifications by which others are admitted to the exercise of that privilege.

Religious opinions create an incapacity to vote. All papists are excluded generally, and, by the operation of the test laws, protestant dissenters are deprived of a voice in the Election of Representatives in about thirty Boroughs, where the right of voting is confined to corporate officers alone; a deprivation the more unjustifiable, because, though considered as unworthy to vote, they are deemed capable of being elected, and may be the Representatives of the very places for which they are disqualified from being the Electors,

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A man possessed of one thousand pounds per annum; or any other sum, arising from copyhold; leasehold for ninety-nine years, trade, property in the public funds, or even freehold in the city of London, and many other cities and towns having peculiar jurisdictions, is not thereby entitled to vote. Here again a strange distinction is taken between electing and representing, as a copyhold is a sufficient qualification to sit in your Honourable House.

A man paying taxes to any amount, how great soever, for his domestic establishment, does not thereby obtain a right to vote, unless his residence be in some borough where that right is vested in the inhabitants. This exception operates in sixty places, of which twenty-eight do not contain three hundred voters each, and the number of householders in England and Wales (exclusive of Scotland), who pay all taxes, is 714,911, and of householders who pay all taxes, but the house and window taxes, is 284,459, as appears by a return made to your Honourable House in 1785; so that, even supposing the sixty places above mentioned to contain, one with another, one thousand voters in each, there will remain 939,370 householders who have no voice in the Representation, unless they have obtained it by accident or by purchase. Neither their contributions to the public burdens, their peaceable demeanour as good subjects, nor their general respectability
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and merits as useful citizens, afford them, as the law now stands, the smallest pretensions to participate in the choice of those, who, under the name of their Representatives, may dispose of their fortunes and liberties.

In Scotland, the grievance arising from the nature of the rights of voting, has a different and still more intolerable operation. In that great and populous division of the kingdom, not only the great mass of the householders, but of the landholders also are excluded from all participation in the choice of Representatives. By the remains of the feudal system in the Counties, the vote is severed from the land, and attached to what is called the superiority. In other words it is taken from the substance, and transferred to the shadow, because, though each of these superiorities must, with very few exceptions, arise from lands of the present annual value of four hundred pounds sterling, yet it is not necessary that the lands should do more than give a name to the superiority, the possessor of which may retain the right of voting notwithstanding he be divested of the property. And on the other hand, great landholders have the means afforded them by the same system, of adding to their influence, without expence to themselves, by communicating to their confidential friends the privilege of electing Members to serve in Parliament. The process by which this operation is performed is simple.

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He who wishes to increase the number of his dependent votes, surrenders his charter to the Crown, and, parcelling out his estate into as many lots of four hundred pounds per annum, as may be convenient, conveys them to such as he can confide in. To these, new charters are, upon application, granted by the Crown, so as to erect each of them into a superiority, which privilege once obtained, the land itself is reconveyed to the original grantor; and thus the Representatives of the landed interest in Scotland may be chosen by those who have no real or beneficial interest in the land.

Such is the situation in which the Counties of Scotland are placed. With respect to the Burghs, every thing that bears even the semblance of popular choice, has long been done away. The Election of Members to serve in Parliament is vested in the magistrates and town councils, who, having by various innovations constituted themselves into self-elected bodies, instead of officers freely chosen by the inhabitants at large, have deprived the people of all participation in that privilege, the free exercise of which affords the only security they can possess for the protection of their liberties and property.

The FOURTH and LAST COMPLAINT of your Petitioners is the length of the duration of Parliaments. Your Honourable House knows, that by the ancient laws and statutes of this kingdom

kingdom frequent Parliaments ought to be held, and that the sixth of William and Mary, c. 2. (since repealed) speaking while the spirit of the Revolution was yet warm, declared, that "frequent and new Parliaments tend very much to the happy union and good agreement between King and People;" and enacted, that no Parliament should last longer than three years. You Petitioners, without presuming to add to such an authority by any observations of their own, humbly pray that Parliaments may not be continued for seven years.

Your Petitioners have thus laid before you the specific grounds of complaint, from which they conceive every evil in the Representation to spring, and on which they think every abuse and inconvenience is founded.

What those abuses are, and how great that inconvenience is, it becomes your Petitioners to state, as the best means of justifying their present application to your Honourable House.

Your Petitioners then affirm, that from the combined operation of the defects they have pointed out, arise those scenes of confusion, litigation, and expence which so disgrace the name, and that extensive system of private patronage which is so repugnant to the spirit of free Representation.

Your Petitioners intreat of your Honourable House to consider the manner in which Elections are conducted, and to reflect upon the extreme

extreme inconvenience to which Electors are exposed, and the intolerable expence to which Candidates are subjected.

Your Honourable House knows that tumults, disorders, outrages, and perjury, are too often the dreadful attendants on contested Elections as at this time carried on.

Your Honourable House knows that polls are only taken in one fixed place for each County, City and Borough, whether the number of voters be ten or ten thousand, and whether they be resident or dispersed over England.

Your Honourable House knows that polls, however few the Electors, may by law be continued for fifteen days, and even then be subjected to a scrutiny.

Your Honourable House knows that the management and conduct of polls is committed to returning officers, who, from the very nature of the proceedings, must be invested with extensive and discretionary powers, and who, it appears by every volume of your Journals, have but too often exercised those powers with the most gross partiality and the most scandalous corruption.

Of Elections arranged with such little regard to the accommodation of the parties, acknowledged to require such a length of time to complete, and trusted to the superintendence of such suspicious agents, your Petitioners might easily draw out a detail of the expence. But it is

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unnecessary.

unnecessary. The fact is too notorious to require proof, that scarce an instance can be produced where a Member has obtained a disputed seat in Parliament at a less cost than from two to five thousand pounds; particular cases are not wanting where ten times these sums have been paid, but it is sufficient for your Petitioners to affirm, and to be able to prove it if denied, that, such is the expence of a contested return, that he who should become a Candidate with even greater funds than the law requires him to swear to as his qualification to sit in your Honourable House, must either relinquish his pretensions on the appearance of an opposition, or so reduce his fortune in the contest, that he could not take his seat without perjury.

The revision of the original polls before the Committees of your Honourable House, upon appeals from the decisions of the returning officers, affords a fresh source of vexation and expence to all parties. Your Honourable House knows, that the complicated rights of voting, and the shameful practices which disgrace Election proceedings, have so loaded your table with petitions for judgment and redress, that one half of the usual duration of a Parliament has scarcely been sufficient to settle who is entitled to sit for the other half; and it was not till within the last two months that your Honourable House had an opportunity of discovering, that the two Gentlemen, who sat and voted

near

near three years as the Representatives of the Borough of Stockbridge, had procured themselves to be elected by the most scandalous bribery, and that the two Gentlemen, who sat and voted during as long a period for the Borough of Great Grimsby, had not been elected at all.

In truth, all the mischiefs of the present system of Representation are ascertained by the difficulties which even the zeal and wisdom of your Honourable House experiences in attending to the variety of complaints brought before you. Though your Committees sit five hours every day from the time of their appointment, they generally are unable to come to a decision in less than a fortnight, and very frequently are detained from thirty to forty days. The Westminster case in 1789, will even furnish your Honourable House with an instance, where, after deliberating forty-five days, a Committee gravely resolved, that, "from an attentive consideration of the circumstances relating to the cause, a final decision of the business before them could not take place in the course of the Session, and that not improbably the whole of the Parliament" (having at that time near two years longer to sit) "might be consumed in a tedious and expensive litigation;" and they recommended it to the Petitioners to withdraw their petition, which, after a fruitless perseverance of above three months, they were actually obliged to submit to.

Your Petitioners will only upon this subject further add, that the expence to each of the parties, who have been either Plaintiff or Defendant in petitions tried before your Honourable House in the present Session, has, upon an average, amounted to above one hundred pounds per day; and that the attornies' bills in one cause, the trial of which in point of form only lasted two days, and in point of fact only six hours, amounted to very near twelve hundred pounds. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

Your Petitioners must now beg leave to call the attention of your Honourable House to the greatest evil produced by these defects in the Representation of which they complain, namely, the extent of PRIVATE PARLIAMENTARY PATRONAGE; an abuse which obviously tends to exclude the great mass of the people from any substantial influence in the Election of the House of Commons, and which, in its progress, threatens to usurp the sovereignty of the country, to the equal danger of the King, of the Lords, and of the Commons.

The Patronage of which your Petitioners complain, is of two kinds: *That* which arises from the unequal distribution of the Elective Franchise, and the peculiar rights of voting by which certain places return Members to serve in Parliaments; and *that* which arises from the expence attending contested Elections, and the consequent degree of power acquired by wealth.

By

By these two means, a weight of Parliamentary Influence has been obtained by certain individuals, forbidden by the spirit of the laws, and in its consequences most dangerous to the liberties of the people of Great Britain.

The operation of the *first* species of Patronage is direct, and subject to positive proof. Eighty-four individuals do by their own immediate authority send one hundred and fifty-seven of your Honourable Members to Parliament. And this year Petitioners are ready, if the fact be disputed, to prove, and to name the Members and the Patrons.

The *second* species of Patronage cannot be shewn with equal accuracy, though it is felt with equal force.

Your Petitioners are convinced, that in addition to the one hundred and fifty-seven Honourable Members above-mentioned, one hundred and fifty more, making in the whole three hundred and seven, are returned to your Honourable House, not by the collected voice of those whom they appear to represent, but by the recommendation of seventy powerful individuals, added to the eighty-four before-mentioned, and making the total number of Patrons all together only one hundred and fifty-four, who return a decided majority of your Honourable House.

If your Honourable House will accept as evidence the common report and general belief of the

the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs, which return the Members alluded to, your Petitioners are ready to name them, and to prove the fact; or if the Members in question can be made parties to the enquiry, your Petitioners will name them, and be governed by the testimony which they themselves shall publicly give. But if neither of these proofs be thought consistent with the proceedings of your Honourable House, then your Petitioners can only assert their belief of the fact, which they hereby do in the most solemn manner, and on the most deliberate conviction.

Your Petitioners entreat your Honourable House to believe that, in complaining of this species of influence, it is not their intencion or desire to decry or to condemn that just and natural attachment which they, who are enabled by their fortune, and inclined by their disposition, to apply great means to honourable and benevolent ends, will always insure to themselves. What your Petitioners complain of is, that property, whether well or illemmployed, has equal power; that the present sylum of Representation gives to it a degree of weight which renders it independent of character; enables it to excite fear as well as procure respect, and confines the choice of Electors within the ranks of opulence, because, though it cannot make riches the sole object of their affection and confidence, it can and does throw obstacles, almost

almost insurmountable, in the way of every man who is not rich, and thereby secures to a select few the capability of becoming Candidates themselves, or supporting the pretensions of others. Of this your Petitioners complain loudly, because they conceive it to be highly unjust, that, while the language of the law requires from a Candidate no greater estate, as a qualification, than a few hundred pounds per annum, the operation of the law should disqualify every man whose rental is not extended to thousands; and that, at the same time that the Legislature appears to give the Electors a choice from amongst those who possess a moderate and independent competence, it should virtually compel them to choose from amongst those who themselves abound in wealth, or are supported by the wealth of others.

Your Petitioners are the more alarmed at the progress of private patronage, because it is rapidly leading to consequences which menace the very existence of the Constitution.

At the commencement of every Session of Parliament, your Honourable House acting up to the laudable jealousy of your predecessors, and speaking the pure, constitutional language of a British House of Commons, resolve, as appears by your journals, "That no Peer of this
" realm hath any right to give his vote in the
" Election of any Member to serve in Parlia-
" ment;" and also, "That it is a high infringe-
" ment upon the liberties and privileges of the
" Commons

"Commons of Great Britain, for any Lord of
 "Parliament, or any Lord Lieutenant of any
 "County, to concern themselves in the Electi-
 "ons of Members to serve for the Commons
 "in Parliament."

Your Petitioners inform your Honourable House, and are ready to prove it at your bar, that they have the most reasonable grounds to suspect that no less than one hundred and fifty of your Honourable Members owe their Elections entirely to the interference of Peers; and your Petitioners are prepared to shew by legal evidence, that forty Peers, in defiance of your resolutions, have possessed themselves of so many burgage tenures, and obtained such an absolute and uncontroled command in very many small boroughs in the kingdom, as to be enabled by their own positive authority to return eighty-one of your Honourable Members.

Your Petitioners will, however, urge this grievance of the interference of Peers in Elections no further, because they are satisfied that it is unnecessary. Numbers of your Honourable Members must individually have known the fact, but collectively your Honourable House has undoubtedly been a stranger to it. It is now brought before you by those who tender evidence of the truth of what they assert, and they conceive it would be improper in them to ask that by petition, which must be looked for as the certain result of your own honourable attachment to your own liberties and privileges.

Your

Your Petitioners have thus laid before your Honourable House, what the mischiefs are which arise from the present state of the Representation, and what they conceive to be the grounds of those mischiefs, and therefore pray to have removed.

They now humbly beg leave to offer their reasons, why they are anxious that some remedy should be immediately applied.

Your Petitioners trust they may be allowed to state, because they are ready to prove, that seats in your Honourable House are sought for at a most extravagant and increasing rate of expence.

What can have so much augmented the ambition to sit in your Honourable House, your Petitioners do not presume actually to have discovered, but the means taken by Candidates to obtain, and by Electors to bestow that honour, evidently appear to have been increasing in a progressive degree of fraud and corruption. Your Petitioners are induced to make this assertion by the Legislature having found it necessary, during the last and present reigns, so much to swell the statute book with laws for the prevention of those offences.

As far as conjecture can lead your Petitioners, they must suppose, that the increased National Debt, and the consequent increase of influence, are the causes of the increased eagerness of individuals to become Members of the House of

Commons, and of their indifference as to the means used to gratify their speculations. To prove that they do not state this wantonly, or without substantial grounds, they humbly beg to call your attention to the following Table, all the vouchers for which are to be found in the journals of your Honourable House, or in different Acts of Parliament.

At the Revolution.

The Public Revenue did not exceed	2,100,000	The number of Statutes found necessary to preserve the freedom and independence of Parliament, to regulate Elections, and to prevent frauds, bribery, &c. amounted only to	14
The Peace Establishment had not exceeded	1,900,000		

At the Death of William III.

The Public Revenue had increased to about	3,950,000	The number of Statutes found necessary to preserve the freedom of Parliament, to prevent bribery, &c. increased to	26
The Peace Establishment had increased to about	1,950,000		

At the Death of Queen Anne.

The Public Revenue had increased to about	6,000,000	The number of Statutes found necessary, to preserve the freedom of Parliament, to prevent bribery, &c. increased to	35
The Peace Establishment had increased to about	2,000,000		

At the Death of George I.

The Public Revenue had increased to about	6,800,000	The number of Statutes found necessary to preserve the freedom of Parliament, to prevent bribery, &c. increased to	37
The Peace Establishment had increased to about	2,600,000		

At the Death of George II.

The Public Revenue had increased to about	8,600,000	The number of Statutes found necessary to preserve the freedom of Parliament, to prevent bribery, &c. increased to	49
The Peace Establishment had increased to about	2,800,000		

In the 31st Year of the Reign of his present Majesty.

The Public Revenue had increased to above	16,000,000	The number of Statutes found necessary to preserve the freedom of Parliament, to prevent bribery, &c. increased to	65
The Peace Establishment had increased to above	5,000,000		

It is upon this evidence of the increase of taxes, establishments, and influence, and the increase of laws found necessary to repel the increasing attacks upon the purity and freedom of Elections, that your Petitioners conceive it high time to enquire into the premises.

Your Petitioners are confident that in what they have stated, they are supported by the evidence of facts, and they trust that, in conveying those facts to your Honourable House, they have not been betrayed into the language of reproach, or disrespect. Anxious to preserve in its purity a Constitution they love and admire, they have thought it their duty to lay before you, not general speculations deduced from theoretical opinions, but positive truths susceptible of direct proof, and if in the performance of this task, they have been obliged to call your attention to assertions which you have not been accustomed to hear, and which they lament that they are compelled to make, they intreat the indulgence of your Honourable House.

Your Petitioners will only further trespass upon your time, while they recapitulate the objects of their prayer, which are,

That your Honourable House will be pleased to take such measures, as to your wisdom may seem meet, to remove the evils arising from the unequal manner in which the different parts of the kingdom are admitted to participate in the Representation.

To

To correct the partial distribution of the Elective Franchise, which commits the choice of Representatives to select bodies of men of such limited numbers as renders them an easy prey to the artful, or a ready purchase to the wealthy.

To regulate the right of voting upon an uniform and equitable principle.

And finally to shorten the duration of Parliaments, and by removing the causes of that confusion, litigation, and expence, with which they are at this day conducted, to render frequent and new Elections, what our Ancestors at the Revolution asserted them to be, the means of a happy union and good agreement between the King and People.

And your Petitioners shall ever Pray.

End of VOLUME III.



